BANK HOLIDAY NUMBER. "THE FINAL WAR" BEGINS

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 501. FOR WEEK ENDING AUGUST 6TH, 1898. [ONE PENNY.

SUMMER LANGUOR

In the warm summer weather, when appetite fails and languor and indolence creep over us, there is nothing more likely to destroy health and render the body liable to the attacks of disease, than the pernicious habit of taking into the system excessive food. Very great care, in fact, is needed to prevent this being done.

One source for the demand of food is the continual loss of heat to which the body is exposed by contact with the air and other surrounding objects. In summer the loss is greatly reduced.

People who will persist in devouring as much food as they do in the winter clog the system, and food which has been utilised by the tissues for the production of energy is cast back into the blood in a state of partial decomposition, and cannot be got rid of without overheating the body.

And yet, in face of these scientific facts, how many people sit down to breakfast and drink tea and coffee—an utterly unscientific practice in itself—and follow this up by partaking of a more or less quantity of flesh food?

Just think for a moment.

The injurious effects of frequent indulgence in tea are well known; and coffee, usually used as a means of keeping people awake, is commonly seen on the breakfast table at an hour when people certainly require no waking up! It is simply compelling the stomach to digest food which the system does not require, and which it cannot get rid of.

Drugs and medicines are worse than useless in such circumstances; they simply assist in the clogging process.

What is wanted is not so much food as nourishment, and a partially digested food beverage as Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa would, if universally used during the summer months, as its merits deserve, do much towards relieving the distress caused by carelessness in choice of food. It is at this season, too, that families on pleasure bent are more liable to overlook such facts as the above, with the result that what should have been a holiday and release from business worries is simply made an excuse for overfilling the body with unsuitable food, the severe effects of which make themselves felt at a time when health and vigour should, if the natural laws of health had been studied a little, have been firmly established. Every portmanteau and hamper should, therefore, contain a supply of Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa, it ought to be on every breakfast table.

Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa, 6d., 9d., and 1s. 6d., can be obtained from all Chemists, Grocers, and Stores, or from 60, 61, and 62 Bunhill Row, London, E.C. As a test of its merit, a dainty sample tin of Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa will be sent free on application to any address, if, when writing (a post-card will do), the reader will name *Short Stories.*

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2. D- - - - - - Y U- - - - - - - - - S
3. P- - - - - - - - - - Y R- - - - - - - - E
4. D- - - - - - - - - Y I- - - - - - - - - E
5. P- - - - - - - Y I- - - - - - - - - E

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Remember, EACH ONE who correctly fills in the missing letters will receive a Beautiful Brand New £25 Gent's or £26 Lady's A.B. Cycle, fitted with the celebrated A.B. Unpuncturable Tyres. These machines are the very best sold by the A.B. Cycle Co. Ltd., of Birmingham and Coventry, and cannot be bought for less than £17 10s. and £18 cash respectively. All we ask you to do when you get the machine is that you pay the carriage on it. These elegant Cycles can be viewed at the Company's London Showrooms, 59 and 60 Chancery Lane W.C. As a guarantee, we have deposited a sum of £300 with the A.B. Cycle Co. Ltd., on account of the Cycles we anticipate giving away, and print below a copy of their receipt. We are quite prepared to spend several thousand pounds on this scheme, as we believe it will do more to advertise our new Hair Preservative **PETROLINE** than if we were to spend this amount in newspaper advertising.

Do not delay but send AT ONCE for a bottle of **PETROLINE,** and grasp this opportunity to win one of these beautiful Cycles. Write your name and full address very distinctly, and put the name of this paper on the top of your letter. Keep the number of your Postal Order in case it goes astray. This Competition will close on September 30th, 1898. Prizes will be awarded and results posted during the following week.

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COPY OF RECEIPT. June 25th, 1898.

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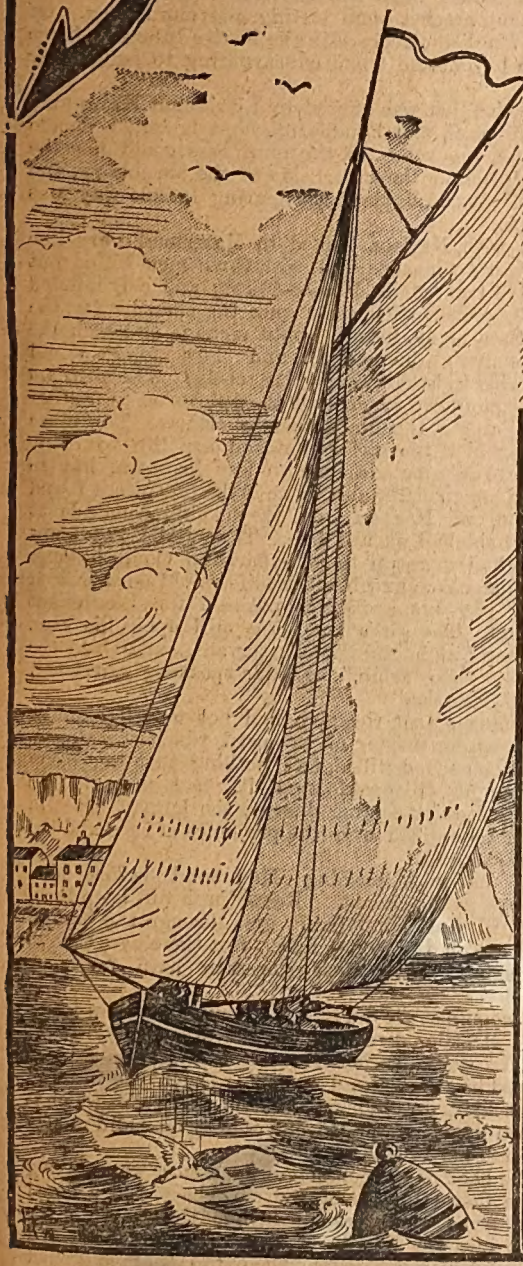
(Signed) for the A.B. Cycle Co. Ltd. The Manager.

Please address The PETROLINE CO., 39 GROSVENOR RD., HIGHBURY, LONDON.

SHORT STORIES

BANK HOLIDAY NUMBER

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON



No. 501.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week ending August 6th, 1898.

UNTOLD TALES OF THE INDIAN MUTINY.

By H. HUNTER.

I.—THE BATTERED RUPEE.

"Deen! Deen! Allah, illa hu!"

The cry rose fierce and exultant. It came from the cavalry lines, whence also issued the sounds of jingling bridle, clashing sabre, and clinking spur.

The squadron of the Fifth Irregular Cavalry which had been stationed at Goojapore was riding off to join the mutineers at Delhi. Unlike their comrades in the infantry lines, they were going with clean hands. No murder had been done by the sowars. They had deserted their colours, but they had respected the lives of their officers.

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Charlie Hammond jumped from his charpoy, and running to the window of the bungalow, peeped out between the slats of the double venetians.

The stars were still in the sky, but the dawn was fast coming. In a few minutes the sun would leap up flaming hot, from behind yonder wall of inky blackness, and the long Indian day would have begun. How many of the handful of Europeans, who, including the doctor and two civilians, numbered no more than ten, all told, would see the fiery orb go down at the end of it? Hammond hurried on some clothes and ran out.

"*Deen, Deen!*" shouted the troopers, as turning in their saddles to cheer, they swept past the sepoy cantonments at the gallop; while from two hundred yelling throats uprose the terrible war-cry of the Hindoo: "*Jai! Jai! Kali mah!*"

Three companies of the Thirty-first Native Infantry were quartered at Goojapore; and the 'slogan' of the Brahmin answered the watchword of the Mussulman.

Hammond had stumbled against something in the verandah—a bundle of shawls and muslins which lay close against the door. The bundle had risen up and caught him by the knees, while a girl's voice had whispered in tones that were shaking with terror:

"They are killing them, sahib! They are killing them down there—the four white sahibs of Oomree's regiment. They will come here next and kill you!"

At that moment, sharp and clear, came a sound which Hammond had heard too often not to recognise instantly. It was the "ping-ping" of a bullet. It came from the infantry lines. Before Lieutenant Hammond could realise what had happened, a dozen balls were cleaving the air, and a figure, bareheaded, and minus jacket or tunic was seen running through the shrubbery at the back of the compound.

"Wilson, sahib," said the girl, holding Hammond tightly by the arm.

Captain Wilson was the senior officer in command of the three sepoy companies stationed at Goojapore. He ran on towards the cavalry stables, where English voices could be heard calling one to another.

Suddenly a great blaze filled the sky. The air was rent with shouts, yells, and execrations. The cry of "*Kali ki jai!*" rose loud and triumphant, mingled with the noise of breaking glass and the sputter of fiendish laughter. The mutineers had fired the cantonments, and were looting the officers' quarters.

"Quick, sahib—quick!" said the girl, trying to pull Hammond along. "They're coming! This way, sahib, this way—quick! If the shameless ones see you, it will be too late!"

She muttered a few words under her breath. It was an invocation to Ram, most widely popular of the many incarnations of Vishnu. She besought him to aid her in saving the white sahib, who had been good to her father and kind to herself. If only the white sahib might be saved, it mattered nothing what happened to her—Narisha.

Lieutenant Hammond, of the Fifth Irregular Cavalry, paused irresolute.

At the mess overnight, the trouble in the air, about which everybody had been talking, but in which so few, it seemed, had really believed, had been discussed seriously for the first time, and in the event of a rising at Goojapore—"a contingency which I think very remote," said Major Murray, who commanded the station—it was decided that the Commissioner's bungalow, which was well placed at the distance of a furlong from the parade ground, should be the rallying point for Europeans.

"I can answer for my men," the major had said to Captain Wilson when the latter had expressed doubts about the stability of his sepoys. "The troopers of the Fifth will never be false to the salt they have eaten."

But again it was the unexpected which happened, as happen it did, times beyond counting in the early days of the Mutiny. In the morning the troopers had ridden off, their faces towards Delhi, and the sepoys in the cantonments were looting and murdering. Of the four English officers with the Native Infantry, three had been bayonetted while endeavouring to leave their houses.

The choice that was offered to Lieutenant Hammond was both cruel and humiliating; but he must decide swiftly, for the voices of the mutineers could now be distinguished on the other side of the shrubbery, and already the broad light of the glaring Indian day was upon them.

To go with Narisha looked to Hammond very like deserting his comrades; but, with three men killed out of ten, and two hundred blood-thirsty and evil-minded sepoys to reckon with, what were the chances for the rest? How many, indeed, would manage to reach the Commissioner's bungalow; and how long would they be able to hold it against the rebels? The murders already committed would urge the fellows on to further excesses, and still more desperate crimes. To refuse the help which the girl had risked her life to offer, would probably be not only to lose his own, but to condemn her to suffer also, since if the mutineers found him gone, and Narisha here, they would conclude at once that she had warned him. They would not know that he had gone up to help garrison Commissioner Ewer's bungalow; and Narisha's life would be sacrificed in vain. It was a painful position for Lieutenant Hammond. The girl's hand was still upon his arm, when Roop Singh, Hammond's servant, came into the verandah. "Go, sahib," he said, speaking hurriedly, "Go with Narisha."

Till that moment the man had not moved hand or foot to warn his master of the peril which threatened. It would be as God willed, and nothing that he, Roop Singh, might do could alter it. But now, in the presence of quick-coming danger, the human heart in the man triumphed over the prejudice of race and the fatalism of creed.

"Go," he said, pushing Hammond before him. "They are in the garden. Roop Singh will keep them in talk till Hammond Sahib gets through the bushes. They'll search the house first. But there's no time to linger, sahib. You must run—run hard for your life."

But woman's wit was a better councillor than man's advice. Hastily divesting herself of a heavy shawl which she wore, Narisha threw it over Hammond. It enveloped him from head to foot. Deftly she wrapped it about him, draping it after the fashion in which it was worn by native women, and putting his hand in hers he suffered her to lead him away.

At the back of the compound, dark faces were peering into the dense foliage of the shrubbery, and a dozen pair of arms were making savage thrusts with the bayonet into the middle of every clump of bush and cluster of tamarisk. From the cavalry parade ground Hammond could hear the mutineers shouting the cries of faith and race.

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He wondered if Wilson had succeeded in getting up to the bungalow. When they found that he (Hammond) wasn't amongst them, what would they think? That he had met the fate of Hubbard and the other poor fellows of the N.I.? His conscience smote him for leaving them; for a moment his steps halted. Narisha hurried him along. Not a word was spoken till they reached the edge of the jungle.

"Where are you taking me, Narisha?" asked Hammond, as she plunged into the thick of the gloom.

"Is my lord, then, afraid to go with his servant?" said the girl wistfully.

"Not so, Narisha," replied Hammond, "but the *sahib-logues* will all be at the Commissioner sahib's; and, truly, that is where I ought to be too. They will look for me and not find me; and what shall I answer when they ask me 'Whither wentest thou? Was it thee who stole away like a thief, disguised in the garb of a woman? Let us not wander far, Narisha. The sepoys mayhap will go after the sowars when they've burnt and plundered the quarter, and I don't want to hear men call me 'namurd' coward."

"Thy own people surely will not call thee by that name, my lord," answered the girl softly, "and what son of a dog is there in Goojapore who shall compete with Hammond Sahib in courage and daring? Yet though friends be few, and enemies many, if but my lord will put his hand in that of his servant," she murmured, "I will save him alive from those that seek to destroy him. Protection of God!" she burst out. "By my soul! I will not live if the evil thing should come nigh him. The *sahib-logues!* Why should my lord go to them? Canthey save him? They cannot save themselves. The *haramzadras* will kill them, every one.

"I have told Oomree—may his soul perish in Nurruk if he deceives me. He is my brother, but I will surely kill him if any evil befalls my lord at his hands—Oomree loves not the English sahibs; but last night, under the *neem* tree, I made him promise thy life, Hammond sahib, to me. Then we arranged it together. But for Roop Singh, who stayed in the village with his people, till the morning star grew faint in the sky, I had warned my lord before ever the sowars came on parade."

"In which case, Narisha, I'm afraid you would have had only your labour for your pains; since I should have been bound to go up to the Major-sahibs to make my report."

To this the girl answered nothing, but, taking Hammond by the hand, led him further into the depths of the forest.

A great silence had fallen suddenly upon them. The heart of each was perhaps too heavy for speech, as the thoughts of each were too full for utterance.

From the direction of the cantonments came the long dull roll of volley firing.

How long they continued to thread the tangle of cane, and bush and tree, before Narisha stopped, Hammond had not the faintest conception. It might have been only minutes; but it might have been hours. The sense of time and place only came back to him with the cessation of motion. He was standing before a low thatched hut, and Narisha was saying: "'Tis a poor lodging, sahib; but you may sleep in peace. None will disturb you in the dwelling of Krishna. See, here is food and water. On the morrow I will return, please God; and my lord shall have news of his people."

"What have you got there, Reynolds?"

She threw herself at his feet and embraced his knees. Hammond lifted her up. Her features worked convulsively under the effects of suppressed emotion. He would have spoken, but the light in her large, soft eyes struck him dumb. The next moment she had broken from him, and, like a startled fawn, was rushing swiftly from the hut.

Hammond sat down feeling utterly miserable.

* * *

"The *sahib-logues* are all dead, my lord; and the *wardi-major* and the two sergeants who were with them. They shut themselves in the bungalow and fired from the windows. Mootee's men begin soon to drop. One—two—three—many! Then Mootee calls for lighted sticks. They throw them on the thatch. They keep on throwing them. By-and-bye, the flames burst through, and the sahibs come out. Then Mootee's men shoot them."

It was a pitiful tale, and Hammond listened in silence.

"The sahib will leave here at sundown for Ranipur," said Narisha suddenly, observing the absorption in which her story had plunged the Englishman. She spoke in a hard, dry voice, very unlike that in which she had related the siege of the bungalow.

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Hammond looked at her. Ranipur was a headquarter station. At Ranipur he would find friends. There was always a battalion of the line and half a battery of artillery at Ranipur.

"Everything is ready," she went on hurriedly, dropping her eyes. "The dooly and bearers will arrive this afternoon. Oomree has sworn to me by Holy Mother Gunga that no harm shall happen to thee. He will see thee even to the gates, and thou wilt give the chief bearer a token to bring back to me. Then shall I know that my lord has found safety with his own people."

"Narisha," he began—but she interrupted the words he would have spoken.

"See!" she cried, displaying a muslin scarf and silken saree, "see what I have brought to deck my lord withal. Ah! but he will make a handsome girl when the woman's veil hides the moustache of the soldier."

She laughed, but the laugh gave Hammond a pain at the heart to hear.

"My lord is to be Oomree's wife. Will he pardon his servant for putting such shame upon him as to make a woman of him? Oomree will take thee away, my lord, in the dooly as his own precious one; and if any male eye should behold thee he will but see the saree and scarf and veil of Oomree's wife. But by what token shall thy servant know if it be well with her lord?"

She held up her head proudly as she spoke. She was a beautiful girl, and Hammond thought he had never seen her look so superbly beautiful as she did at that moment.

He fumbled in his pockets. His things had been thrown on in a hurry—money, ring, nicknacks, all had been left on his dressing table. He had nothing; nothing but a battered rupee—a battered rupee with a hole drilled through it.

"Would you know it again, Narisha?" he inquired, offering her the coin.

"When I see it again, my lord, I will go to Benares and pay my vow to Krishna. Oomree will go to Delhi when he has discharged his pledge to Mother Gunga; but Narisha will stay in her house at Goojapore till my lord's token is brought back to her."

In the dusk of the day a dooly in charge of a *havildar* and two sepoys was met on the Ranipur road by the peasants returning from their work in the paddy fields.

* * * * *

"What have you got there, Reynolds?" It was in the narrow lane leading from the Lahore Gate at Delhi—the lane where, only a few days before, John Nicholson had got his death. The speaker was Lieutenant Hammond, late of the Fifth Irregular Cavalry.

"It's a woman, sir," answered Corporal Reynolds.

"Dead?"

"Yes, sir."

"I hope none of you men killed her. There have been several women found killed in the city. Of course, if they're mixed up with the men, you can't always say where a hand will fall when blows are going."

"This one's been shot, sir. What could she been doin' here now? Good-lookin' gal, too."

Hammond was turning away, when an exclamation from the corporal arrested him.

"She's got a sort of a charm round her neck, sir. Blest if it ain't an old battered rupee slung on one o' them cords what the old Brawmin's call holy threads."

Hammond bent over the body and recognised the features of Narisha. She had followed Oomree then to Delhi.

"Cover her up, men," he said, removing his cap, "and take her outside the city. I will attend the ceremony. Of ten Englishmen stationed at Goojapore I only am left; and, but for her who lies there, I should have shared the fate of the nine. It was she saved my life. The battered rupee was a token I sent her—the only thing I had then about me—that she might know that the agent she trusted had placed me in safety. Let it be buried with her."

Hammond felt a strange thrill as he stood by the shallow grave and thought of Narisha as he had last seen her, in the full flush of youth and beauty; and now, lying cold and stark in her narrow bed, with the battered rupee above her heart.

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The Search for Emeralds

"We haven't half tried yet," said my friend John Harlow. "If there had been no difficulty about finding where the emeralds came from, they would have been hunted up long ago."

"I have it!" he exclaimed, after a moment's thought. "There's some timber growing at the upper end of the flat; let us make a stout raft of logs, trust to luck, and float down the stream. That's the way to find both the limestone and a place to get at it."

I did not reply, and was still hesitating as to whether I ought to consent to so wild a scheme, when a great uprooted tree stranded on the point where we were standing. Directly my eyes rested on two great branches which had grown so closely together that at twenty feet from their junction with the trunk they were only a few feet apart, I felt here was a means of making our journey without the danger attending an ordinary raft—of having it torn to pieces against some obstacle in the stream.

A similar thought had crossed my partner's mind. We set to work to chop the trunk into shape for our purpose. And here I may explain how we came to be in that Central American cañon.

John Harlow and I had been rolling about South and Central America, trying to make our fortunes in various ways. While in San Salvador, I was able to render assistance to a man—an old miner—who had met with an accident. He died, however; and on his death-bed he gave me a packet.

That packet contained a description of a gorge in a large cañon in a wild part of Central America, together with a piece of limestone with emeralds imbedded in it.

That was all, but it was sufficient to start us off. After much trouble, we had found the spot; but had got no nearer the treasure. But to continue.

The next morning we carried our provisions on board, secured them firmly, and with long poles we had cut for such purposes, pushed off in the stream. Our craft was a success, for although the bow dipped a little when the current ran swiftly, the platform remained perfectly dry. About an hour after we had started, our speed became so great, and the shocks our craft received so violent, that we were very much alarmed.

"Listen; what does that mean?" said John Harlow as a heavy roaring broke upon our ears, and when we were swept round a bend, he shouted: "Hold on for your life, we are coming to a waterfall."

I slipped my arms and legs through some of the loops.

During the next few moments I thought that nothing could save us from destruction. We crashed against the side of the cliff, rebounded, whirled round and round, struck rock after rock with the force of a battering ram, then rushed straight forward at racehorse speed. A cry of terror escaped me as the stern of our craft was lifted in the air. Half-blinded by spray, down we plunged into the foaming mass below.

When the waters closed over me, and the daylight was gone, a giant seemed trying to tear me from the raft. I believed my time had come; but just as I thought that I could no longer hold my breath, our brave little craft lifted her bow above the foam, and the danger was past.

"Why, the fall can't be more than eight feet high," I shouted, as I looked back.

"Eight feet or eighty, it nearly did for me," replied John Harlow, holding on with one hand, and wringing the water from his beard with the other.

We now entered a part of the cañon where even John's cheerful spirits became depressed. Peaks, cliffs, and rocks, were stained vermilion; the same colour was reflected on to everything; and once when I withdrew from the river a dripping pole with which I had been steering, I instinctively wiped my hands, for the clefts and caves appeared like horrible wounds, and the water dripping from them, human blood.

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A few minutes more and we were out of the blinding glare of the awful place. Then we came to a long stretch of the kind of formation for which we were looking, and all at once John Harlow pointed to an opening or flat of semi-circular shape, and shouted:

"There's our landing place!"

Then he plied his pole so vigorously that our craft came close enough to the land for him to leap ashore. We made fast to a rock with a strong rope, and our boat, swinging out of the current, lay along the bank. After landing some provisions, our rifles, and a few other things, we looked about us.

No sunlight could penetrate the dismal place; for high above our heads, a great mass of rock covered it in and reached so far over the river itself, that we were unable to see the top of the opposite precipice. Huge fungi—white, yellow, brown and red—clung along the base of the surrounding cliffs; while a grey, woolly-looking substance of the same family, depended like drapery from the jutting crags, and waved about with every breath of air.

We dried ourselves at a fire of driftwood, and, as the ground was damp, we began to look for some cave in which to pass the night. I had taken one side of the flat and John Harlow the other, and I was standing somewhat despondent at my want of success, when my partner called to me and pointed to a narrow cleft in the wall.

"Look there," he said; "that is the entrance to a cave. A large one, too, it seems, and the floor slopes upwards, so we are sure to find a dry spot to sleep on, and Jem, old man, I believe we shall find the stones about here somewhere."

After a short consultation we decided to bring all our things ashore, and for this purpose we approached the bank of the river.

All at once John Harlow clutched my arm. "Great Heavens!" he cried, pointing to a mass of branches which were being carried rapidly down the stream. "There goes our raft; some floating trees have become entangled with it and torn it loose."

My heart stood still. What an awful fate awaited us, imprisoned in that loathsome place.

Our small supply of provisions would soon be exhausted, and then——

Despairingly I stood and gazed at the great rock overhead, and the towering walls that shut us from the world. Once I tried to speak, but the words stuck in my throat. Presently John Harlow put his arm through mine, and said:

"It strikes me we've been and gone and done it.

"Cheer up, old man," he continued. "And now as it will soon be dark, you take the things up to the cave, while I collect some driftwood for our fire."

By the time I had carried my last load into the cave, my partner had laid in a sufficient supply of fuel to last us through the night.

As soon as we had eaten our supper we made our fire blaze, and examined our immediate surroundings. There was not much to see. The side at which we had entered stood out boldly in the ruddy glow, but the roof and further portion of the sloping floor were lost in darkness.

"Well," said John, stretching himself comfortably on the sand which covered the floor, "things might have been worse, and you won't make them any better by sitting there as solemn as a man at his own funeral. To-morrow we'll try exploring the cave, and if the ground keeps on rising it might bring us to an outlet of some kind, and salvation."

Although our chances of escape were small, I could not help being cheered by Harlow's hopeful way of viewing our situation. At last, tired out by our day's exertions, we lay down on the sand and slept.

The next morning we had our breakfast in the open air, and then prepared to explore the cave.

A happy thought occurred to me whereby we could save our candles. I had a small can of lard. I melted the grease, soaked in it pieces of dry wood about eighteen inches long, and in this way made eight fairly-good torches. With these stuck in our belts, our small stock of provisions on our backs, and our freshly-filled water-bottles slung over our shoulders we commenced our journey.

As we went on, the floor became steeper and steeper, until at last we had to climb, and John's idea of a possible outlet began to seem reasonable.

For about half-an-hour our exertions kept us silent, but all at once John Harlow, who was leading, gave a cry of warning and we stopped. We were standing on the edge of what appeared to be a great expanse of mud or water. On touching it with my foot, however, it proved to be sand, covered by a thin crust which gave way under the slightest pressure.

My partner hesitated about advancing any further into this unknown country. Alas! it was I who suggested we should continue on our way. I pointed out that, even though we had no landmarks to guide us, and our compass might be influenced by deposits of mineral, still we should leave such a plain track on the perfectly smooth sand that we could easily return if we wished, without any danger of getting lost.

On we went for an hour or more, and low reefs of partly decomposed rock began to make their appearance, like a succession of dark waves rolling towards us. Suddenly, John Harlow dropped on his knees so unexpectedly that I shot over his head, extinguishing both his torch and my own. At the same moment there was a terrific crash, a crash so terrible that the earth shook at the concussion; the air dis-

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placed by the fall of some huge mass of rock rushed past, and the whispering echoes became less and less, then died away.

"What has happened?" I cried.

"We've come to the emeralds," shouted my partner, still on his knees, nearly putting out his freshly-lighted torch as he waved it wildly above his head.

"What do you mean? Have you gone mad? Did you not hear that awful crash?" I exclaimed, shrinking back from him.

"Crash? Well, let it crash—Jem, my boy; look here—look," and with trembling hands he scooped up some sand, and held it towards me. "Emeralds! Emeralds!" he shouted with excitement. "The ground's alive with them! We're millionaires!"

I could see little green specks shining amongst the sand, and had I not previously received a great fright I should probably have been as much excited as my partner. Instead of this I felt angry.

"Millionaires are we!" I said, pushing away his hands. "Yes, millionaires, and with all our wealth we could not purchase a crust of bread!"

My words brought John to his senses, and after a short silence, he said in his usual manner:

"You are right, Jem. Still, I would rather be somewhere else with my pockets full of emeralds than in here with a crust of bread as big as a church." Then while trying to scratch one of the green crystals with his knife, he added: "They are emeralds right enough."

We now picked up handfuls of the sand, blew away the finer particles, put the stones in our pockets, and continued to do so for some time. How long I should have remained thus employed it is hard to tell, for as I felt my store increasing, I became more and more excited, until my partner impatiently pulled me to my feet, and, despite my angry protests, fairly dragged me away.

My excitement soon subsided, yet as we plodded on, thoughts of wealth and happiness in the future made me almost forget the dangers and difficulties of the present.

In half-an-hour or so the air became much warmer, and the sand gave place to rocks; but the thick dust with which they were coated still retained our tracks. And now we had to stop and discuss a matter on which our lives might depend. We had lighted our last torch! Should we use the candles?

We determined to use half of them before giving up all hope of an exit, for we thought that, if we used but one at a time on our return journey, they would carry us back as far as we wished to go.

Shortly, a great change took place in our surroundings. The ground became rougher as we advanced, and we were obliged to climb heights and depths of which, in the intense darkness, we could form no definite conception.

Yet, judging by the time it took us to descend one of these crevices, a false step meant death. And now, to add to our danger, the air became damp and the rocks slippery.

At last we reached comparatively level ground, but dense mists enveloped us so closely that we were stumbling over protruding rocks. Then it gradually became clearer, and the moisture overhead was drifting along in clouds.

"Ha!" cried my partner, "there must be a draft of air to carry the mists along like that; somehow I feel that our troubles are almost at an end."

Scarcely had the words left his lips than his feet slid from under him, and he rolled down an incline towards—oh, Heaven! the awful sight comes again before my eyes!—towards a dark, oily, turbid substance, through which bubbles of gas forced their way, accompanied by little jets of steam.

With a shriek that froze my blood, he disappeared. Half frenzied with horror I cried aloud:

"John Harlow, come back, come back!"

Then I ran from the place until I caught my foot against a rock, my candle went out, and I came heavily to the ground. As with shaking hands I fumbled for my matchbox, the darkness seemed peopled with ghastly forms—every way I looked John Harlow's apparition rising from the ground. Once more I had a light. Then—on—on!

Delirious with sorrow and fear I rushed on. I know not how I went or how the time went. I was brought to my senses by a discovery. I was at the edge of a chasm and could hear the splash of water below.

While I leant forward and tried to penetrate the darkness, the rock on which I stood gave way under me, and I fell with sufficient force to dash my candle from my hand. I rolled over twice, and then was stopped by a second rock in time to hear the first splash into the water below.

It was useless to think of finding the candle—the last one—for I had jerked it far out into the chasm; but I still had some wax matches, and I came to the desperate resolution that I would continue my descent, and, if water barred my way, to plunge into it and drown rather than prolong my sufferings.

But I had no choice. Before I could make a move my support gave way and I went sliding down to the waters below. Then I fainted with fright.

When my senses returned, I lay for many minutes trying to think where I was. On either side was a great cliff, above, the moon shone calmly as she floated through the fleecy clouds. Thinking that I had awakened from a horrible dream, I wearily raised my head and looked about me.

I was lying at the base of a huge cone-shaped heap of decomposed rock, its apex resting against the cliff, and terminating in some black, ragged object, which I could not quite make out at first. Soon, however, a peculiar hissing noise struck my ear, and as I gazed upwards, the black object showed itself to be a kind of irregular archway, through which a grey torrent of small particles poured down the cone, and I knew that it must be the exit from the scene of my suffering.

For days I wandered in a network of interesting gorges with perpendicular sides. Once with my revolver I killed a squirrel, and so badly did I need food that I ate it raw. Another time I used my ragged shirt as a net, and caught some minnows in a pool.

I have dim memories of Indians giving me food; and once, I think, they fled before me, as though I were some dangerous animal.

Then one day I found myself being carefully tended by rough but kindly hands—some prospectors had found me.

Years have passed since then, and though I have twice been very poor—I lost all my emeralds, save half a dozen small ones, during that dreadful time—the wealth buried in that dreadful place has never tempted me to revisit the scene of my awful experience.

T. GREENE.

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The Spanish (Onion) Privateer.

I.

Ye wad dootless ken that me an' Jock MacGregor wur jint owners o' the splendid twenty ton steamship *Haggis* plying between Spain and Prestonpans in the Spanish inyin trade, but ye wudna hae suspeckit that she wis the first privateer tae get letters o' marque frae the Spanish Government.

It a' cam' aboot this way. Ye see, me an' Sagasta wiz aye kin' o' chummy owre the heed o' me and Jock daein' sic a big thing in Spanish inyins, an' when I ca'ed on him at Madrid some months syne he says tae me confidential like:

"Senyore MacParritch," says he, "the interests o' commerce and the Spanish inyin trade are menaced. In a short time ye'll see America picking a quarrel wi' us aboot Cuba or some siccan a trifle so's tae divert the Spanish ingin trade frae Prestonpans tae America. In event o' war can I rely upon you?"

"Senyore Sagasta," says I, "you can. Me an' Jock'll fecht tae the last gasp in defence o' justice an' the Spanish inyin trade. *Viva la Espanya!*"

"I knew it," says he; "bring in Senyore Jock."

So I gaes oot and brings in Jock an' a' the rest o' ma gallant crew, an' lines them up in imposin' array afore the dazzled gaze o' the Spanish Premier. "Jock MacGregor," says I, "stan' oot." "Whit fur?" says he. "Tae be reviewed," says I, turning wi' haughty dignity tae Sagasta. "This man here," says I, "is pairt owner o' the s.s. *Haggis* wi' masel'; this other yin is Bill 'Icks an English body that means weel, though he disna aye dae weel, an' this here is Terence O'Hara, a rale guid sort when it comes to fechtin' an' drinkin'; windin' up wi' this young loon, Jimmie Dougal, oor caibin boy."

"What a splendid body o' men!" says he. "Don Jock," says he, "when the American eagle swoops upon the s.s. *Haggis*, will you stan' calmly by?"

"I'm shair I'll no'," says Jock. "I'll wring 'is neck first."

"Bravo, my fine fellow; an' you, Senyore Billicks, will you also defend your freedom tae the death?"

"Yes," says he, "if Saunders MacParritch pays me my back wages."

I looked at him wi' a freezing glance o' silent contempt, an' Sagasta says, smiling like:

"Oor sojers keep sayin' that, tae; but they're guid sojers for a' that. Your wages 'll be a' richt, ma man," an' under thae condeeshuns Bill agreed tae defend 'is freedom.

"An' you, Senoyre Terence, will you fight?"

"Oi will, yer 'onor," says Tarry; "who is it Oi've got to foight, an whin do Oi begin?"

"I'll tell ye in plenty time, Senyore Terence," says Sagasta, pleased like, an' pattin' Jimmie on the heed he adds; "I ken this yin 'll dae a' richt, I see he's a Scotsman like yersel."

Sae wi' a wave o' 'is soord he knighted us a', an' then presented me wi't as a token o' esteem an' respec'; an' efter handin' me a letter o' marque an' anither letter wi' nae marque on 't ava, containin' sealed orders to be opened in the English Channel.

"Come oot tae the back-yaird," says he, "and get a piece o' ordnance tae pit on board the *Haggis*."

So oot we a' gaed, an' he shows us a nate wee brass cannon.

"Aw, but there's a hole in it," says Jimmie.

"That's the touch hole," says Sagasta, an' he showed us hoo to work the deedly weapon, and gied us a stock o' powder an' shot, an' then Bill 'Icks hurled the hail affair doon tae the docks in a wheel barra.

"*Buenas noches, Ustedes,*" says Sagasta tae oor cavalcade as we moved grandly awa', an' I yells back "The same tae yersel, Senyore," an' wi' thae waurlike an' encouraging words ringin' in oor ears, we left the shores o' sunny Spain wi' anither cargo o' Spanish inyins aboard.

II.

Sae after some hard steamin' we reaches the English Channel, an' I opens ma' sealed orders in the presence of o' ma' trusty band an' reads them oot:

"Intercept a' vessels fleein' the American flag and tow them back tae Spain—Sagasta."

"Bring oot ma' telescope," says I, an' syne I sweeps the horizon. "Yonder's yin," says I; "an it's a fat yin. Great Scott," says I, "it's the *Paris!* A' hauns on deck till I tell ye whit tae dae." Sae they a' cam' croodin' roon an' I draws ma' soord an' pints tae the rapidly approachin' *Paris*.

"Yonder," says I, "are the tyrants that wad grund ye beneath the iron heel o' slavery. As freeborn Britons, wu'll we staun tae be trodden on? Naw," says I, "wu'll shed the last drop o' bluid in oor veins first. Oor orders are tae capture yon vessel, an' accordin' tae the law o' nations whit we tak' an' keep we get tae oorsels. An' though we're Britons we're Spanish Knights, forbye, mind that. Wu'll sune be steeped tae the lips in gore, bit wu'll fecht like men in defence o' the Spanish ingin trade an' oor happy homes in Prestonpans, an' Ballymena, an' Auchterarder, an' Seeven Dials, and Mullguy. Are ye a' ready, men, to fecht tae the daith?"

"Ain't we to hev no grub first," says Don Bill Icks; an' I says, "Yes, ma brave lad; gae doon tae the caibin an' bring up oor rations. Noo, ma gallant band," I conteenued, "wur on the verge o' a glorious battle—"

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and Don Bill 'Icks pops up 'is heed, an' says he, "Don Jimmie's ate the sardines." "What!" says I, "a' yon fivepenny box, put the scoondrel in irons, lock 'im up." "It wizna me," says Don Jimmie, "it wiz Alfonso XIII." Noo, Alfonso XIII. was oor cat, but on accoont o' 'is illustrious name I didna' like tae look *him* up, so I thunders oot ferocious-like, "Lock up the sardines efter this; discipline must an' shall be enforced aboard the s.s. *Haggis*. Beat tae quarters."

Sae Don Jimmie rattles on an' auld corn beef can, an' then I yells oot, "Clear the decks fur action," and Don Bill 'Icks chucks Don Jimmie's bonnet intae the watter an' I roars out, "Ye're no tae heve things oot o' the ship that wey; put them doon in the engine-room," So Don Bill 'Icks drops a besom doon the shaft, an' I hears a kind o' noise, an' Don Tarry bangs up frae whaur 'e'd been shovellin' in coals, an' says he, "Oi'll break yer jaw for yez, Don Bill 'Icks, if yez throw things on me heed agen." So I pacifies them by sayin', "Men, men, can ye no' unite in the face o' a common foe? Hist the Spanish colours, Don Tarry," says I; so 'e whups oot the flag 'e used tae carry at the Orange Walk, an' unfurled it flutterin' proodly tae the breeze.

"Noo, Don Jock," says I, "stan' by wi' a rope an sling it on tae the *Paris* as she scoots past; see an' catch on an' haud her ticht; is the cannon loaded, Don Jimmie?" "Aye, aye, Don Saunders," says he, an' I sings oot—"Full steam ahead, Don Tarry," an' wi' that we swept majestically intae action. Oh, it wiz a graun sicht tae see us bearin' doon upon the doomed ship wi' colours fleein', an' me graspin' the tiller wi' the yae haun an' ma soord wi' the tither, an' Don Jock stannin' calm bit determined wi' a coil o' rope roond his neck, an' Don Tarry wi' the steam haunle in his caurie haun an' a chunk o' coal in his richt, an' Don Jimmie haudin' a lichted match to set off the cannon wi' when the time cam', an' Alfonso XIII. sittin' on the death-dealin' ordnance washin' his face, an' Don Bill 'Icks sittin' on the gunnle o' the ship eatin' a hunk o' breed an' cheese. It wiz truly an awe-inspirin' scene.

The *Paris* wiz jist aboot a hunner fathom awa' when I gies the command: "Deed slow stop full speed astarn," so's to rin alangside o' 'er till Don Jock got cleekit on til 'er, and then the *Paris* cam' abreast o' us. Jock snibbled 'er wi' a masterly twirl as she tried tae rush past, an' in a meenit we were bein' draigled starn first through the bilin' ocean at twa an' twenty knots an 'oor. "Haud on til 'er, Jock," says I, forgettin' in the wild excitement o' the battle that I was addressin' a pure-blooded Spanish nobleman, wha had preserved his prood title unspotted throughoot coontless generations o' a fortnicht. "Haud on till 'er, Jock," says I; "she's worth haudin'," an' wi' that Jock wips the rope roon a post an gies it a kinsh that made a' thing snug.

The capture o' the *Paris* wiz an accomplished fac'.

She wiz oors.

III.

"RESERVE yer fire, Don Jimmie," I yells.

"Oh, I've burnt my thoom," says he, an' wi' that the careless loon drapt the burnin' match on the touchhole. Bang went oor cannon, an' Alfonso XIII. got sic a fricht that he loupt the hicht o' the funnel an' the deedly instrument rowed owre on Don Bill 'Icks's taes.

"Blarst this war!" says Don Bill 'Icks.

The scene o' carnage and devastation resultin' frae that shot was something awfu'. For yairds aroon' the sea was covered wi' the sheets o' auld newspapers Don Jimmie had wadded the gun wi', an' oor quarter pun shot had scraped echt-pence or nine-pence worth o' pent off the side o' the devoted *Paris*. "Load 'er up again, Don Jimmie," I yelled, fur the battle fever was on us a'. Twa or three men cam an' looked owre the bulwarks o' the doomed vessel an' yin o' them asked us if we were in distress.

"Oi'll dishtress yez," roars Don Tarry; "it's Fogarty, the biggest villain that iver left Ballymena unhung."

"Barrin' yersel'," shouts Fogarty, an' wi' that Don Tarry lets fly the chunk o' coal he had in his haun' an' knocks Fogarty's pipe oot'n 'is jaw.

The dugs o' waur were let lowse wi' a vengeance.

"*Paris* ahoy," says I, wi' freezin' hauteur, "heave tae or we'll sink ye," and just at that meenit a lump o' cauld pie catcht me richt in the lug. "Men," says I, "ye saw that; let there be nae quarter, slay them without mercy; bring up the reserve amuneetion an' butcher them in cauld bluid." An' then the battle raged. Don Bill 'Icks brocht up the reserve ammuneetion, a box o' rotten eggs, laid last year, an' we commenced to shell the enemy wi' ghastly effect. Everywhere oor shells struck they spread panic amongst oor foes. Don Bill 'Icks got hame a magneeficent shot richt in Fogarty's e'e, an' Don Jock an' Don Tarry played terrible havoc wi' the miscreant that threw that piece o' cauld pie. An' a' this time Don Jimmie mainteened an incessant rakin' fire wi' oor heavy ordnance. He sent yae shot slungin' in through a porthole intae the cook's pantry, smashin' a soup tureen tae atoms, an' wi' 's very next shot he struck the cowerin' cook 'imsel' an' knocked oot twa o' 'is false teeth. Oor foes fled dismayed before oor witherin' fire; but a second or twa later a puff o' white vapour spurted frae the side o' the *Paris* wi' a deafenin' roar.

"Button up your jaikets, my men," says I; "she's begun tae use 'er Krupp guns'—but syne I saw she was only blawin' off steam; then oor foes trained the deck hose on us an' tried to droon us off till they got the rope cut, but every time a hose gunner showed himsel' we picked him off wi' a rotten egg. I saw that we wad hae tae board the vessel an' stop 'er ingines, so I gied the order:

"'Cease firin' an' board,'" an' Don Jimmie Dougal grabbed up Alfonso XIII. and pitched him on tae Fogarty's neck, cryin':

"Forward brave heart, Dougal will follow thee," an' it wis a' that Fogarty cud dae tae teer Alfonso XIII. frae his muffler an' throw 'im back at Don Bill 'Icks, fellin' that splendid warrior on a heap o' Spanish inyins, but Don Bill 'Icks springs tae his feet in a saycond an' clutchin' up the biggest inyin 'e cud see 'e screeches oot:

"Blime if I don't slab that bloke on the snitch," an' aimin' wi ruthless preceesion he smashed Fogarty richt on the nose wi 'd, an' jist at that meenit the rope broke an' the *Paris* escaped frae 's like the win', an' Don Tarry howls oot tae Fogarty:

"Ye're Cunnaucht," an' the last we saw o' the *Paris* was Fogarty foamin' wi' impotent rage, an' covered wi' bluid and rotten eggs.

IV.

VICTORY was oors, an' the settin' sun gilded that scene o' strife wi' a halo o' glory as we steamed calmly on in search o' anither victim, wi' Don Bill 'Icks openin' a fresh tin o' sardines for oor gallant band.

Of course the *Paris* got safe tae America efter that, but Sagasta was sae pleased wi' oor heroism that he decorated us a' wi' the Order o' the Spanish Inyin an' promised us mair tae follow.

G. VINCENT-HOLYTOWN.

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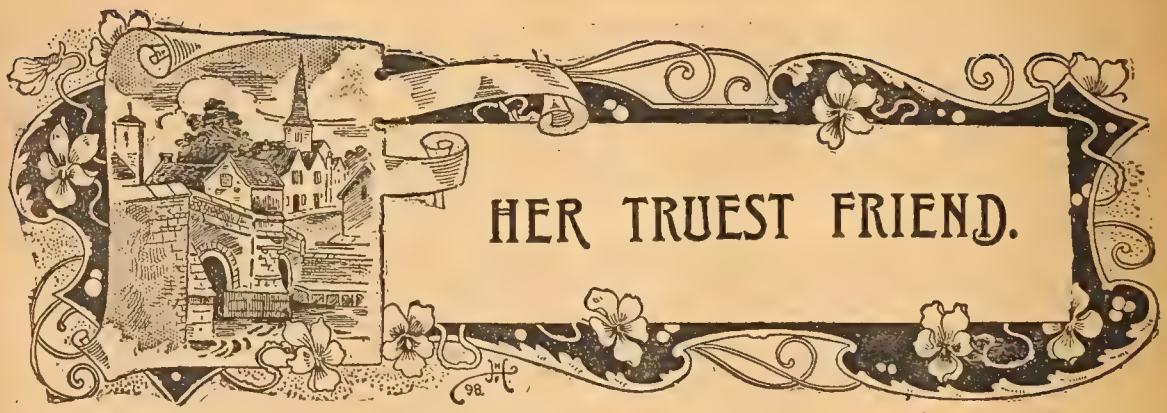

HER TRUEST FRIEND.

Miss Dewar was five-and-forty years of age on the 19th of March, 18—, well, no matter what year.

And she was stout and short, with no visible waist; and hands that were red and fat, instead of white and slender; and features that belonged to no Grecian type or Roman mould, but seemed to be setting up each on its own special account, with no reference whatever to the others.

But we have not mentioned the most important fact of all. Miss Dewar had £10,000 of her own.

And that was without doubt the reason that her relatives sent her pressing invitations to "come and visit them," and despatched various presents to the farm. And that is also why little girls worked hideous pincushions and tidies to decorate her rooms, and young men wrote acrostics for her birthday, and everybody listened politely to her speeches, however prolix they might be.

For a rich old maid was worth cultivating, and it wasn't at all likely now that Miss Dewar would ever marry.

It was a bleak afternoon, the red and brown leaves whirling round and round in the blast, and the great wood fire upon the hearth sending, every now and then, spiteful little gushes of smoke into the room where Miss Dewar and her second cousin and companion, Janet Heath, sat together, working crotchet roses for a counterpane.

"Janet," said Miss Dewar politely, "you're a fool!"

Janet looked up with a flush of colour on her pale, pretty cheek.

She was not at all unaccustomed to these little complimentary remarks on the part of Miss Dewar.

"Be a sensible girl," added the elder lady. "Give him up, and I'll buy you a blue silk dress and a black lace shawl."

"But I love him, Miss Dewar."

"Oh, psha-a-aw!" grimaced the spinster. "Love indeed! I never was in love!"

"And," added Janet, growing more rosy than ever, as she stooped to pick up her crotchet hook, "he says he would be miserable without me. Don't, please, be angry; but, indeed, I must marry him."

Miss Dewar jumped up so suddenly that the dozing blackbird in its cage uttered a shrill note of consternation.

"Very well," she said, "very well, Janet Heath. Pack your trunk as soon as you please. I can dispense with your services at once. And pack mine first, if you please, Janet Heath."

"You are not going away, Miss Dewar?" queried poor Janet in consternation.

"I'm going to visit my relatives," said that lady with pursed lips.

And then little Janet knew that her own fate, as far as any worldly advantages to be derived from her kinship to the heiress, was sealed.

"Put in the black silk gown, Janet," said Miss Dewar in a tone as lugubrious as if she were giving orders for her own funeral. "Of all sin, I regard ingratitude as the basest—and the China silk scarf—to think that I have nursed a viper to turn and sting me at last! And don't forget my easy slippers—though I don't know either why my corns should be entitled to any more consideration than my poor bruised heart."

And then, as Janet Heath began to cry, Miss Dewar marched out of the room.

"I never could endure the damp," said the maiden lady. "I'll go to my niece Maria, or I'll make Herbert Smythe a sort of a visit; he's always saying how delighted he would be to entertain me. As he's a bachelor I must put up at a hotel; but he will take me about. They both love me, although I haven't done half for them that I have for this little serpent's tooth of a Janet. I dare say she expects to be my heiress, but she'll find out her mistake."

"They seem to live very nicely," thought the rich relation, when she arrived at the house of her niece Maria. "I didn't know her husband's income justified such style as this."

The servant showed her into a reception-room, furnished after the style of Louis Quinze. His mistress was out, but would return presently, he explained.

"I'll wait," said Miss Dewar.

A wizened little girl, with her hair braided in long Chinese plaits, and red, chill-looking elbows, was tinkling away at the piano. She looked round as the guest entered.

"You are Angelina, I suppose?" said Miss Dewar affably.

"Yes," said the child, "I'm Angelina. And who are you?"

"I am Miss Dewar," said the heiress graciously. "You have heard your mamma talk about me, haven't you?"

"Oh, yes!" said Angelina, her small eyes lighting up.

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"You're the old maid that mamma says is so out—out—"

"Out of health?"

"No; some very big word."

"Outrageous?" suggested Miss Dewar, somewhat discomfited.

"No—not that—outlandish! And you're going to die and leave me all your money, and then we're to travel on the Continent. But papa says he doesn't see but what you're going to live for a century."

"Hem!" said Miss Dewar. "So your mamma's kind enough to consider me outlandish, is she?"

"Mamma's going to invite you to visit us," went on the unwisely communicative Angelina, "when the De Veres are gone. She says she doesn't want them to be shocked with your Noah's-Ark ways. I had a Noah's Ark once," added the child, "with a dog in it and Shem, Ham and Japhet."

"I dare say," said Miss Dewar, checking a strong inclination to laugh, although she felt herself growing purple in the face with indignation. "I think I won't wait any longer, Angelina. Good-bye."

And Miss Dewar shook the dust of that mansion off her feet.

"A pretty hypocrite's nest I should have got into there!" she said, half aloud, as she entered the vehicle she had been wise enough to bid wait. "Janet Heath, with all her faults, was at least frank and truthful enough. Drive to 27 Batchelor Square, coachman!"

It was one of a row of "Mansions," and her cousin occupied a suite of apartments on the third floor.

She beat a brisk tattoo on the panels with the handle of her umbrella, and a voice answered:

"Come in."

But to her amazement the occupant of the apartment, instead of a young artist in a black velvet painting jacket, was a grim female, sitting very upright on a gothic chair, with tattered gloves and bonnet bent on the side.

"Is Mr. Smythe in?" asked Miss Dewar.

"No," answered the stony female, "he ain't. But if you're wise you'll sit down, like me, and wait until he does come in. I s'pose you've come after your bill?"

"Have you?" asked Miss Dewar, taking the first part of the hint, by depositing herself on a sofa, and wondering where the man-servant was.

"Yes—for the seventh time. He owes everybody—Smythe does. I'm his laundress, but you can ask his landlord and the wine merchant, and the tailor, and the hatter, and——"

"Then," curtly observed Miss Dewar, "I should think you were all great fools for trusting him!"

"So we be," said the woman grimly; "and I ain't a denyin' of that, but you see he's kept us on the string all along with stories of his rich cousin, Miss Dewar, as has made her will in his favour, and is goin' to leave him no end of money."

"Oh!" said Miss Dewar, rubbing her nose vehemently with the end of the umbrella handle.

"He says," added the unconscious traitoress, "that she's as old as Methuselah, and can't live but a few days; but I, for one, don't believe a word of it. But you ain't a-goin', be you?"

"Yes," said Miss Dewar, rising. "Please give him this card when he comes in, and tell him, if you like, the little conversation we have had."

And she was nearly downstairs before the laundress, fitting on a pair of spectacles, had read the two words inscribed upon the card:—

"Miss Dewar."

The heiress was very silent during her drive to a hotel. Perhaps she was engaged in rendering the

Janet Heath sat by the fire . . . musing.

funeral rites on her dear departed delusion! All that she said to herself was contained in one sentence.

"I don't like being made a fool of," she mentally enunciated, "and I believe I've come very near it."

Janet Heath sat by the fire in the next evening's twilight, musing, perchance, half in sadness, half in shy pleasure, when the door clicked on its latch and in walked Miss Dewar.

Janet started to her feet with a slight cry.

"Don't be alarmed," said Miss Dewar stroking her soft brown hair with a kindly, reassuring touch. "I've come back to you, Janet Heath; for I believe, in spite of everything, you are the truest friend I've got, and that you love me after all!"

"Indeed, Miss Dewar, I do!" sobbed Janet, with her old foolish trick of tears.

"And so," said Miss Dewar. "You can marry that Harry of yours, and he can come here to live, and we'll be a happy family together. Untie my bonnet strings, Janet—they've got somehow into a knot—and make me a cup of tea. Those railways are enough to shake one into a jelly!"

So Miss Dewar settled back into the old groove again, and when the letters came she sent them back unopened. And when Mr. Herbert Smythe and the Barton family arrived in *propria personæ* she obstinately refused to see them.

"I won't be bothered!" said Miss Dewar; "Janet's my heiress, and there's an end to the matter."

And the relatives discovered that they might as well attempt to move the rock of Gibraltar as to alter her determination.

HARRY MOORE.

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STARTS TO-DAY.

THE FINAL WAR

By LOUIS TRACY.

PROLOGUE.

Why London is Safe in November.

London in a fog is a disembodied city.

There is life without form, motion without visible intent, weird cry and rumbling sound without apparent reason or locality. Buildings lose their distinctive shape, and abruptly fade into impenetrable gloom; men and women possess no outward individuality, but pass, strangely shapeless, from darkness into darkness.

All around there are millions of people and miles of streets, but the wayfarer recks not of them. His tangible touch with the outer world is confined to an effort to plant his feet firmly on the greasy pavement, whilst he seeks some guidance by grasping the iron railings in front of a house. Each yellow-rayed lamp is a discovery; each lighted shop-window an event of importance; the crossing of a street places every sense upon the alert to discover unseen dangers. The instinct of self-preservation causes men to curse and women to shriek when they stumble against an obstruction. If the object proves to be some equally perturbed pedestrian, the muttered apology is due more to habit than to concern.

On the night of November 2nd, 1898, a fog of unusual density had temporarily blotted London off the map. Experienced people who were anxious to get home from the City abandoned cab or omnibus in favour of the underground railway.

The stranger in London was well advised to stay indoors at hotel or lodging-house, as it was utterly impossible to reach any distant point unless complete acquaintance with the topographical features of the way were joined to knowledge of the best-lighted streets.

Two men who had been dining together in a pleasant set of chambers situated in one of the streets leading out of Portman Place, quickly discovered this unpleasant fact when they endeavoured, about nine o'clock, to walk towards Hyde Park. They had managed to reach and cross Oxford Street—were cannoned into a bye-street by a hansom whose driver had been offered a sovereign if he succeeded in getting his fare, a celebrity of the variety stage, to a well-known music hall in time for his "turn"—and finally came to a standstill near a lamp post in Hanover Square, without having the slightest clue to their whereabouts. They showed their annoyance by growling imprecations upon England and its climate in French and German, but agreed that it was best to remain in one spot until a passing pedestrian should pilot them somewhere.

They were both handsome and well set-up men, fashionably attired, and clearly persons of consequence. Whilst they spoke French as a means of communication it was evident, from the gutteral utterance of one, that he hailed from the other side of the Rhine.

"We are in a very awkward and untimely predicament, my friend," said the Frenchman. "Were we better acquainted with this detestable London and its peculiarities we would have ordered some more coffee and liqueurs and chatted quietly in front of a comfortable fire, rather than venture out into this truly British variety of atmosphere."

"So," replied the German. "Meanwhile, pass a cigarette."

His companion searched through his pockets for his cigarette case, but he had forgotten it.

"Misfortune!" he groaned, with humorous pathos. "England deprives us even of that resource."

"Ah, well. We will have our turn. But hold. Try your English on this pig of a coachman. They never understand what I say, and, holy blue, I am not surprised, as I hardly comprehend myself."

A smart brougham and a pair of horses had been drawn up close to the murky beams from the gas lamp. Before the Frenchman could interrogate the driver, a footman had jumped nearly on top of him in his haste to reach the door of the carriage.

"Beg pardon, milady," said the man, as he opened the door, "but the coachman says he cannot find his way, and your ladyship's party is running considerable risk if he proceeds."

"Oh, how stupid of him," came a voice from the interior. "Tell him he must go on. We cannot stop here."

"Mother, dear!" in a softer tone, "perhaps we had better

find out where we are before Thompson drives any farther."

"Wait a moment, Irene. We have not long left Brook Street, and I think this must be Hanover Square. I will just jump out and tell you in a jiffy, as I know how the numbers run." Suiting his action to the words, a young man sprang from the brougham and collided with the German on the kerbstone.

"*Pardon, monsieur,*" said the Frenchman, bowing. "Vil you do ze goodness of telling me ze how to go?"

Something in the stranger's voice and manner enlisted the keen attention of Captain Harington. He was the junior military attaché of the British Embassy at Paris, and spoke French like a Parisian. But he answered in English, without considering his motive:

"Yes, if you will wait until I learn myself."

The Frenchman hardly understood the concluding idiomatic phrase, but he gathered the general purport of the remark. Harington groped his way up the steps of the nearest house and struck a match to look at the number.

"If we are in the square," he cried, "we are just six doors from the Grasmeres. I will go and make certain," and they heard his retreating footsteps.

"What does he say?" queried the German.

"I cannot tell exactly," answered the other. "He is going to make something, but he will return. If it were not for the fog we might have a peep at the fair ladies in the carriage."

In a few seconds came Captain Harington's cheery voice: "It's all right, Thompson. Just pull up a few yards ahead."

The carriage moved off, and the foreigners were again left disconsolate by the one tangible thing they had so far discovered, the lamp post.

"He is a beast, that Englishman."

"A beast, undoubtedly. But I think he will come to our assistance, as he is taking these ladies to a house close at hand."

The Frenchman's opinion was justified a moment later. The young officer returned, and asked them where they wished to be directed to. They consulted together on this point, and the German suggested returning to their residence, but his companion prevailed, and finally intimated to Harington that they desired to reach the French Embassy.

Still speaking in English, their guide informed them that it would be a most difficult matter to proceed to the Embassy during the prevalent dense fog, but if it was of pressing importance he would put them in the easiest way of getting there. The Frenchman assured him that whatever the risk they must endeavour to gain their end, whereupon Captain Harington led them into Regent Street and gave them explicit directions regarding the turn into Piccadilly.

In order to render his meaning quite clear, he drew them close to a well-lighted shop window, and sketched a plan of their route with his finger on a pane of glass.

At last they parted with mutual hat-lifting and the Englishman retraced his steps with a puzzled expression on his face.

"For the life of me I cannot tell why it is," he thought, "but the presence of these two men in London seems to me to be a harbinger of trouble. Why are they both here at the same time, and above all else, why are they together?"

He could give no valid reason for his perplexity, but he was glad, in the same indefinable way, that they had no suspicion of his identity.

When he entered the brilliantly-illuminated house of the Earl and Countess of Grasmere, he found a numerous company assembled for the *musicale* to which he had been escorting Lady Eskdale and her daughter. Lord Eskdale was the British Ambassador at Paris, and, after enjoying a brief holiday in Yorkshire among the pheasants, he had hurried back to his official duties, leaving his family in London to fulfil a few social engagements before they rejoined him at the Embassy.

To Captain Edward Harington fell the pleasant duty of accompanying the two ladies until their return to France, and, judging by the bright glance with which Irene welcomed him as he took a vacant chair by her side, the visit to England was a delightful one for both.

"What a time you have been, Teddy," she whispered. Lady Eskdale was at the moment engaged in a voluble exposition of her adventures in the fog to a well-known judge, otherwise her daughter's remark would have been couched in less familiar language.

"I had to show those men who stood near the carriage, when the coachman stopped in the square, the way into Regent Street," he replied. "By the way, did you recognise either of them?"

"I? No. How could I? Did you?"

"I think so. Who is this chap singing?"

"The new Russian tenor. He is a great favourite in society, although practically unknown on the stage. I am told that he was introduced under the *ægis* of the Russian Ambassador, so he was immediately lionised."

"Well, that is curious," said Harington.

"What is curious?"

"The number of different nationalities I have more or less come in contact with during the last five minutes. Is Lord Salisbury here to-night?"

"No. He made a big speech somewhere to-day about the taxation of ground values, or some such mysterious subject, and he is tired, but the Foreign Office is represented by the Under-Secretary. I wish to goodness you would not be so jerky in your conversation. If you don't improve I shall have to talk to the judge."

"Where is he?"

"Why, standing near mamma, of course."

"I mean the Under-Secretary."

"There, near the window, smirking at the fat lady in black. What *is* the matter with Teddy," she went on to herself, for her companion murmured a hasty apology and went towards the couple she had indicated.

Watching his opportunity, Captain Harington caught the Under-Secretary as he moved away.

"Will you give me a moment, sir?" he inquired.

"Certainly," replied the other, with an air of polite surprise at being thus unceremoniously buttonholed.

"I am Captain Harington, of the Grenadier Guards, and at present second military attaché at Paris," said the young officer, rather at a loss to explain himself, now that he had succeeded in gaining the great man's attention.

"Oh, yes. I knew your father well. In fact, we were at Eton and Christ Church together. Dear me, how you remind me of him and of the years gone by. I am delighted to know you. Come into a quiet corner and let us become better acquainted."

They passed into an outer room, followed by Irene's wondering eyes, whilst an outburst of applause signalled the conclusion of the Russian tenor's song.

More at his ease now, Edward told the Under-Secretary of his *rencontre* with the foreigners, and concluded by saying: "I brought them quite close to a well-lit shop window so as to be sure I was not mistaken."

"And who were they?" asked the Minister, puzzled to account for the serious manner in which his companion had recited a trivial incident.

"Count von Bremen, the head of the Intelligence Department of the German Army, and General de Rosny, Chief of the Staff in the French Army of the North."

"A queer companionship," said the Under-Secretary, after a pause.

"So it appeared to me," said Harington, relieved to find that an older man than himself should have been similarly impressed. "They left me to make the best of their way towards Albert Gate."

"What! The French Embassy?"

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"Yes. When they were discussing their next move, de Rosny urged von Bremen to accompany him, as it had suddenly occurred to him that it was important they should go there."

"And what do you make of it all?"

"I have no theory that is of any value, sir."

"Well I should not mention the matter to anyone else. Ah, M. Pochowski, how are you? That was a lovely song you gave us just now."

Harington turned and saw the Russian tenor standing quite close to him, apparently taking an artistic interest in a fine collection of Satsuma vases.

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The distinguished officers, who may now be designated by their proper names, had little difficulty in reaching Piccadilly after the careful instructions given them by their courteous guide, but when they left the area of partial illumination afforded by the places of business at the eastern end of that well-known thoroughfare, they had to exercise extreme caution to avoid further bewilderment even in such a straight road.

"It has just occurred to me," said de Rosny, as they quitted a tobacconist's shop where they had obtained a supply of the much-needed cigarettes, "that this is the Jour des Morts, the day that we French people devote to memories of the dead."

"A most cheerful reflection, truly," said the Count.

"And "—in a lower tone—"it is also *à propos* to say that if we were invading London to-day it would be a most suitable festival so far as the French army was concerned."

"Why?"

"Ah, your wits are dulled by the fog, my friend. Do you not see that the most invincible attacking corps would be powerless against this infernal mixture of smoke and mist?"

"It would equally affect the defenders."

"Not so. The English commander would say to the colonels of his regiments: 'The enemy are massed in the suburbs to the south. Take a couple of policemen, or postmen or omnibus conductors, with each company as guides; march by your own routes, and exterminate the enemy wherever you find him.' *Voilà tout!*"

"By the left bank of the Rhine, it is true, too," replied the German, as he was shot against his companion by the impact of a big Lifeguardsman who walked straight ahead as though it were broad daylight, for he was in a hurry to reach Knightsbridge before ten o'clock.

The Frenchman ignored the unpleasant form of the rejoinder and went on: "You now know why I wished to go to the Embassy to-night. We must delay our preparations until the spring or early summer. I never before understood what a London fog really meant, and I am told that such days as this are frequent during the winter. Moreover, I was always opposed to a campaign at this time of the year. It is so horribly unpleasant."

"I do not attach so much importance to that consideration as you do, though that it deserves to be borne in mind as a factor in the situation cannot be doubted; but I am disposed to agree with you for other reasons," replied Count von Bremen.

"And those are?"

"First and foremost, the necessity for an even greater surprise than we have presently arranged. These Englishmen are born soldiers, and we must absolutely give them no chance of rallying after the first blow is struck. The affair must be so rapid, so dramatic, so far-reaching, that England shall be prone at our feet within a few hours. I feel assured that I can convince you of the possibility of a greater *coup* than that which we now contemplate. Indeed, it was to discuss the details that I desired to return to our residence, but the Embassy will serve as well. Then, in the second place, we must have more definite assurances from Russia."

"France will soon secure those. I heard to-day from Paris that another big loan was about to be negotiated. A thousand thunders! What is this?"

De Rosny had run into one of the iron posts that guard the carriage ways at Hyde Park corner, and nearly swallowed his cigarette owing to the violent blow he had received in the stomach.

"When we are looting London," he growled, whilst spitting tobacco out of his mouth, "I shall make it my special business to blow up these things with dynamite. They are as hard as an Englishman's skull. Ugh! I hate this miserable country and everything in it."

When, at last, after a thoroughly uncomfortable walk, they entered the French Embassy, they were announced as M. Jean Riche and friend, and were at once conducted to the Ambassador's library. They remained closeted with him for nearly an hour, and Count von Bremen, at the end of that time, held telephonic communication with the German Chargé d'Affaires, the Emperor's representative being at that moment in Berlin.

As the result of a further consultation, de Rosny and von Bremen sent off telegrams to the Ministers of War at Paris and Berlin respectively, containing the apparently harmless message, "Financial settlement postponed," which was safer than a cypher telegram, as by a secret code it signified: "Imperative reasons for delay. Will communicate with you personally on my return."

In another hour the fog had lifted. Thousands of Londoners poured forth from places of amusement to sup at club or restaurant, or hasten home to distant suburbs; but not one amongst them, not one of the millions in the great city that lay around for miles, knew that for a brief season, and by the fiat of a little conclave of men gathered in a house overlooking Hyde Park, England had been spared the devastating horrors of war.

CHAPTER I.

The Ball at the Embassy.

The month of May in Paris, if the elements be reasonably propitious, is a perfectly delightful period, and May Day of 1899 heralded in the promise of a gracious summer. The French capital was more than ordinarily full of visitors, and life in the world of fashion was more like the changeful scenes of a *ballet divertissement* than the dull routine of ordinary existence. Americans were there from Chicago and New York spending millions made in packing pork, Russian notabilities abounded, and Germans, the male element vastly predominating, were in such numbers that the wonted supply of lager beer fell short in the cafés. A mad whirl of gaiety and light-heartedness filled the thoughts of every class of society. This social abandonment was, if possible, accentuated by a species of political electricity that permeated the air, and of which all men were dimly conscious.

The new Ministry in France had taken up and developed the policy of colonial expansion given effect to by their predecessors, and a singular *rapprochement* with Germany was vaguely supposed to have contributed in a very remarkable way to the furtherance of French ambition. Both countries had been working amicably together for nearly a year, and already the result had made itself felt in the most vulnerable portions of the British empire.

It is true that England had long ago secured all the best market for her produce, that her ships carried five-sixths of the commerce of the world, and that her surplus population had the pick of many continents wherein to live and prosper. But a determined attempt was now being made by our great commercial rivals to take from her some at least of the advantages that had been gained by centuries of enterprise backed up by daring perseverance.

The Rhine had dwindled into a stream of no political significance, and men openly said on the boulevards and in

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the *brasseries* of Paris and the beer gardens of Berlin that the star of England was beginning to wane. As a witty Frenchman put it: "The bones of Englishmen whiten the by-ways of the world: they make most excellent sign-posts for our future progress."

But Lord and Lady Eskdale and their beautiful daughter felt that, come what might in the future, it was their present duty to maintain in regal style, the hospitable traditions of the British Embassy, and thus it came to pass that the first night in May was chosen for an official dinner, to be followed by a grand ball.

During the six months events had travelled apace with Harington and Irene. Lord Eskdale thought so highly of the young soldier that his wife's desire for a more advantageous match for her daughter was over-ruled, and the pair were now affianced. The Prime Minister had personally conveyed his thanks to the Ambassador for the information placed at the service of the Government by the attaché, as subsequent investigation had shown that it was fraught with grave importance.

Inquiries had been made amongst the London bankers, with whom it was well known nearly every foreign prince had large dealings, and it had been found that there was a steady and continual withdrawal made by these, for no accountable reason of the securities they held. This was enough to put the Government on the alert. Harington's timely service was of considerable value, and he reaped the benefit, for the kindly interest of an exalted personage means much. In fact, a staff appointment at Aldershot, when the next vacancy occurred, was promised to him.

His sister Ethel, a charming girl of Irene's age, was in Paris on a visit to the Eskdales, and it was one of those coincidences suggestive of arrangement that Lieutenant Frank Rodney, of H.M.S. *Magnificent*, should have chosen gay Lutetia as the scene of a short leave of ten days. Harington and he were fast friends, and it was not unlikely that the tie of friendship might be strengthened, if the guardsman had not judged amiss the tendency of the pleasant-mannered sailor's thoughts. It was his ardent wish that Rodney might make a match of it with his sister, and Ethel had even stronger views on the question than her brother, so for once the course of true love appeared to be running smoothly.

The gathering in Lady Eskdale's reception room before dinner was announced was very select indeed. The French President and his wife, the Russian Ambassador and the Grand Duchess, the German Ambassador, the French Ministers of War and Marine, the Governor of Paris, and quite a number of other great people made the brilliant *salon* glitter with the magnificence of their diamond stars and ornaments, whilst the lovely dresses of the women toned down the gorgeousness of the uniforms by their softer hues.

The British Ambassador, of course, took in Madame la Présidente to dinner. His interested and urbane manner gave no indication of the troubled state of his thoughts; and in very truth he had that afternoon had much cause for perplexity. A cypher telegram, dispatched at midday to London, was unaccountably interfered with *en route*, and a call from the Foreign Office for a repetition, had, as he ascertained shortly before the dinner-hour, resulted in even greater confusion. In the endeavour to put matters right he also discovered that the telephonic communication between the two countries had unaccountably broken down.

Now, his message to Lord Salisbury contained a very plain intimation that affairs were in an alarmingly unsettled condition in France, whilst large sales of British securities on the Bourse had emanated from inspired quarters, and not from any public movement. These sales had been proceeding steadily for some days and had seemingly culminated that morning. From this condition of affairs he argued the necessity for keen watchfulness on the part of the British Government.

By an extraordinary blunder, this message, although in a cypher believed to be known only to three men in London and three in Paris, had been metamorphosed into an absurd reference to the weather, and the repetition brought about an inextricable medley of meaningless nonsense. But Lord Eskdale was even more suave than usual to the President's wife.

There had been a grand review of the garrison of Paris that day, and the lady, with the fanfare of the trumpets still in her ears, asked the Ambassador what he thought of the troops.

"They were superb," he replied. "Their soldierly qualities were such that I almost regretted it."

"But why?"

"I would prefer to see such perfect manhood engaged in the arts of peace rather than part and parcel of a huge machine of destruction."

"That is the last thing I should expect to hear from an Englishman," said madame.

The Ambassador laughed. "Have we such a reputation as fire-eaters, then?" he queried.

"You speak in the accents of success," she retorted. "It is always the interest of those who have the booty to prate of peace."

"In such a matter, England's interest," he replied gravely, "is the interest of the world. The preservation of the peace of Europe is our inheritance."

Madame smiled.

"What would you do," she asked, "if the French were to dispute your guardianship?"

"Ah, madame," returned the courtly ambassador, "it is not your men we fear, it is your women."

"You laugh!" exclaimed madame, stung by his playful treatment of her words. "But take care. A hundred years ago France taught the world the art of government. She must now teach it the art of empire."

Lord Eskdale glanced rapidly at her, and for a moment a troubled look rested upon his face.

"A woman is seldom epigrammatic," he reflected, "without being also indiscreet."

Then, aloud, with perfect serenity:

"You have achieved more than half the task already, my dear lady."

Madame paused appreciably before she answered, with a quick look at her companion:

"In what sense?"

"Our hearts are already prostrate; it needs but the subjugation of our arms."

"Ah, you were only leading me up to a pretty compliment. But I am glad that you acknowledge it is for us to contest with you the domination of the world."

"I yield to you now, without a murmur of dissent," he said.

She saw that the Ambassador was in a frivolous mood, so changed the conversation to the prospects of the coming exhibition.

Why, he never knew until afterwards—but Lord Eskdale felt that he added years to his life during the progress of that meal. It was apparently unending, and it required all his powers of self-command to restrain himself from reviling the excellence and prodigality of his cook.

At last it came to a conclusion, and Lady Eskdale rose whilst his Excellency escorted Madame la Présidente to the door of the drawing room. He returned at once, to find that the President and the Governor of Paris wished to be excused from attending the ball on the ground that affairs of departmental importance in connection with the spring manœuvres of the army in the north required their attention. Their departure served to break up the men into groups, and Lord Eskdale encountered Harington, who was present officially, near the door.

"Edward," he said, "where is your friend, Rodney? Can I see him at once?"

Harington laughed and blushed. "To tell the honest

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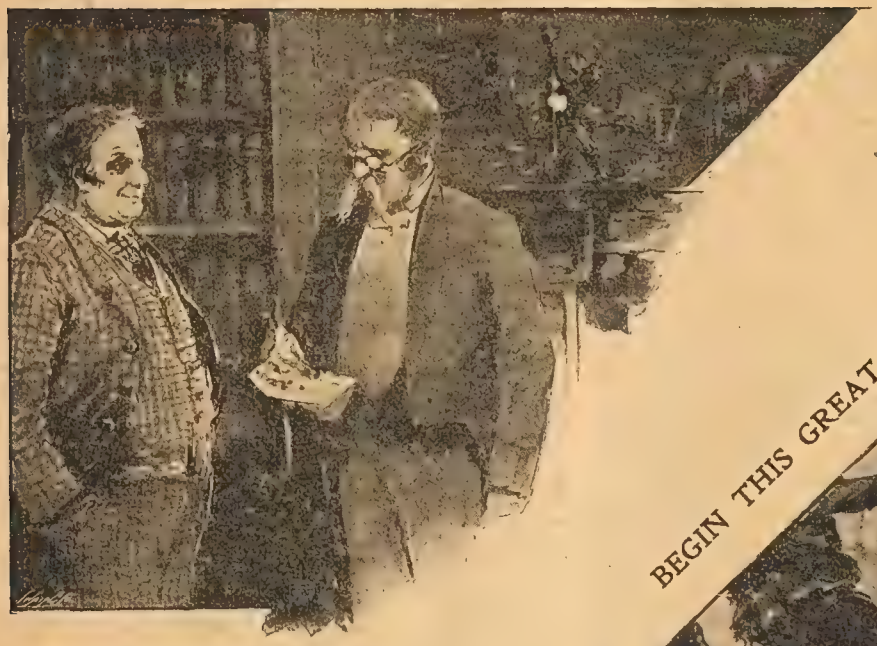

"You have indeed done your country a good turn."

BEGIN THIS GREAT WAR SERIAL TO-DAY.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS "THE FINAL WAR" HAS BEGUN.

The Grenadier Guards flung themselves into three of the enemy's trenches.

The German fel

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Tracy.

referred to in the first four chapters.

A perfect tornado of shells swept the sea-front.

ned into the sea.

The British fleet had arrived upon the scene.

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truth," he replied, "he is dining in my bedroom, where he will dress, as he is bound to Ethel for the first dance."

"Tell him to prepare for a long journey at once, without anyone being the wiser. You do the same, and meet me in my private office in five minutes."

The guardsman was clever enough to smilingly assent as he lit a cigarette, for the German Ambassador had come to say that he also had pressing official work which would prevent him from remaining longer, and he hurried from the room.

In one of the passages Harington met Irene. He glanced hurriedly round to see if anyone was looking, then took her in his arms, hopelessly crushing her frock the while, kissed her fervently, and said: "Goodbye, dearest. Your father will explain, but don't say a word to a soul."

And he disappeared towards his own apartments.

Irene thought he had taken leave of his wits, but she kept her amazement to herself nevertheless.

When Frank Rodney heard his instructions, he thanked Heaven that he had had his dinner, seized some of Harington's clothes and shirts, in case he should not have time to go to his hotel, and in three minutes announced himself ready for orders.

When they reached his Excellency's study they found him awaiting them.

Without any preamble he thus addressed the naval officer:

"Lieutenant Rodney, I wish you to catch the ten o'clock train from the Gare de Lyon for Italy. You will reach Modane to-morrow morning at eight o'clock. From there send by Italian cable the single word 'Britannia' to the Governor of Malta, and to Sir Michael Culme Seymour, who commands the Mediterranean Fleet, which is at present at Valetta. Repeat these two messages from Turin in the afternoon in case the first may have miscarried, as the officials at Modane are French. A P. and O. steamer arrives at Brindisi the following morning, and you must catch it, if necessary taking a special train for the purpose, and wiring the captain to wait for you as a Queen's messenger. Go on to Malta, and tell the Governor in person the circumstances under which I sent you, and proceed by the same steamer if you can, to Gibraltar, where you will then find the Mediterranean Fleet. Here is £250 in gold for your expenses, and this sum should be ample for all contingences. It is now 9.15. You can do what I ask?"

"Yes, sir," replied Rodney. "But my leave expires in two days."

"Captain Harington will get that put right for you at the Admiralty. You, Harington, will leave for London by the eleven o'clock train, and, if you reach there by to-morrow morning—it is possible you may be detained—find Lord Salisbury or the Under-Secretary, and tell him my precise instructions to Lieutenant Rodney, subsequently explaining matters at the Admiralty. To-day my telegraphic dispatches have been interfered with, and from other indications I fear immediate and pressing European complications."

"It is an odd thing, sir," said Harington, "that the French army manœuvres should be held so early this year and quite close to Brest, while the Germans having followed their example in the locality of Bremerhaven."

"And this morning, sir, whilst driving with Eth—I mean Miss Harington—near Vincennes, I counted 400 field guns with their limbers, drawn up in a barrack square, and an astonishing number of empty trucks on some adjacent railway sidings," added Rodney.

"I know, I know," said Lord Eskdale, with utter anguish in his tone. "But now, my dear boys, go, and God be with you. If I am mistaken, Harington, return here towards the close of the week. Leave by this door, as it commands readier access to your rooms."

He silently shook their hands and opened a door other than that by which they had entered.

The two men darted out and nearly fell over Lord Eskdale's French valet, who was in the passage engaged in the needless operation of dusting his own boots.

"Who is that fellow, Teddy?" said Rodney, and, on learning, he added quietly: "Call him to your room on some pretext."

The servant murmured an excuse on hearing Captain Harington's order given in French, but when it was peremptorily repeated he came with them. Once inside the chamber Rodney said sternly to the valet, speaking in English:

"Why were you listening outside Lord Eskdale's study?"

After a moment's hesitation, the man replied that he did not understand what the officer was saying.

Rodney smiled.

"You are clever," he said, "but that pause was fatal. We shall be under the disagreeable necessity of gagging and tying you for the rest of the night. Tear up one of the ambassadorial sheets, Teddy, and be quick, as we have not much time."

The Frenchman was no coward. The electric light switch and bell-push were near him, and with a bound he had turned off the one and pressed the other, knowing that even if he did not escape from the room, the two officers would hardly care to explain why they were found assaulting a servant. But he had never had any personal experience of the methods of English sailors. In a second Frank threw him to the floor, grappled him with arms and legs, rolled with him under the bed, and being a much more powerful man, forced his arms beneath his back, whilst effectually smothering his mouth. Then, in a singularly calm tone, he said: "Turn up the light, Harington; order two cabs when the servant comes, and then shift the bed."

The result of this arrangement was that in very brief space of time the valet was tied, dumb and helpless, upon a sofa, and the Englishmen were hurrying off with their portmanteaux. Harington on the way out, giving instructions that his room was not to be disturbed before the breakfast hour. To enforce the command he locked the door and gave the key to his own soldier servant.

"I should like to see Tommy Atkins' face in the morning," laughed Rodney, "when he finds our trussed bird. It's a good job we saw him in the passage or we should have been stopped on some pretext during our journey. By-the-way, Harington," he added, "His Excellency forgot one thing. I will wire you at the club from Modane to-morrow to say I have got through. It may be allowed to pass even if the frightful burst-up which the business seems to indicate comes off. One more word, old chap, kiss Ethel for me."

"Oh," said Harington, "I didn't know you had reached that stage. Good-bye, old fellow, and good luck."

And their *fiacres* rattled off through the lines of carriages which were bringing up guests to the Embassy.

The Russian Ambassador and several French Ministers had by this time absented themselves, and Lady Eskdale received more than one laughing complaint from a wife concerning the ungallantry of her spouse. Her ladyship was puzzled, but could get no opportunity of a quiet word with her husband, who looked completely at his ease chatting with several distinguished personages.

Irene and Ethel, who were, beyond doubt, the loveliest women present, were astonished at the absence of their wonted partners, and if Irene had some perception of the facts of the case, she obeyed her lover's instructions and kept her scant information to herself. At last Ethel Harington lost all patience, and asked Lord Eskdale if he knew where her brother was.

His Excellency smiled as he replied: "Both he and Lieutenant Rodney have left Paris on affairs of State. They had no time even to say 'Good-bye' to you, my dear."

Whereupon Ethel, in wonderment, communicated the news to Irene, and they both marvelled greatly; but the fact did not prevent them from scribbling a name in front of every dance on the programme.

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About midnight Lord Eskdale's English valet managed to reach his master and whisper: "There's an English gentleman in the hall, my lord, and he says as how he has a note for your lordship from Captain Harington, and he will give it to no one but your lordship personally."

"Take him to my study, Jenkins," was the reply, and when his Excellency entered the room later he found awaiting him a stout, red-faced Briton, in the regulation check suit and deerstalker hat of the middle-class Englishman, when travelling on the Continent.

The stranger evidently meant to make sure of his man before stating his errand.

"Is your Excellency my lord—I mean is your lordship his ex—that is to say, my lord, are you—"

"Yes, I am Lord Eskdale," was the kindly answer, much to his relief.

"Well, my lord, my name's Briggs, William Briggs, of Catford, where I do a bit in the bicycle line, though I don't ride much myself nowadays, being a bit too 'eavy above. I've bin over 'ere a week, my lord, partly on business and partly on pleasure, as the sayin' is, and I was a-goin' 'ome to-night when a young gent 'e comes up to me on the platform, an' 'e says, says 'e: 'You're an Englishman?' 'Why, anybody can see that,' says I. An' says 'e: 'Are you in any special 'urry back?' and says I: 'It's the season, but I won't lose much for a matter of a few hours. But why d'ye ax?' Says 'e, 'I'm Capting Harington, from the Hembassy. 'Ere's my card,'—which 'e gev me—'I want yer ter do his lordship the Hambassador a service. Will yer stop till the morning train and take 'im'—meaning you, your lordship—'a note on a matter of great himportance to England, and 'ere's a fiver for yourself.' 'E seemed in desperate earnest, my lord, an' I wouldn't take 'is fiver, but 'ere's the note," and he handed Lord Eskdale an envelope addressed to himself and endorsed "Per kind favour of Mr. Briggs."

"'E said as 'ow I wasn't to give it to anybody but your lordship's own self, my lord," and Mr. Briggs glowed with the thought of the fine story this would make for the *habitués* of the Cat and Anchor at Catford.

The note ran as follows: "Whilst detained for a moment in a block of carriages outside the Embassy, I heard one coachman say to another that he wondered why the President and a lot of Ministers and Ambassadors were driving off to Versailles at this time of the night. Here, on the platform, there are General de Rosny and a large number of staff officers, travellers to Brest by the northern line. I thought you should know this.—E. H."

"Mr. Briggs," said Lord Eskdale, when he had gravely re-read the pencilled message, "you have, indeed, done your country a good turn by your readiness to postpone your journey. Will you write to me from Catford and assure me of your safe arrival there?"

"I will, my lord," said Briggs, visibly inflated.

"You had better stay here to-night, as it is so late, and I presume your luggage is at the station. My man will look after you. Good-night."

Briggs did not explain that his luggage, consisting of a woollen shirt, a pair of socks, a brush and comb, and six collars, was contained in the small hand-bag on the table—his mind was too full of the glorious possibilities of Catford.

The President's wife had retired at midnight, and by three o'clock the last carriage had rolled away from the courtyard of the Embassy. Lady Eskdale was about to seek her husband and chat with him concerning the events of the night when a closely-veiled woman sprang out of a hired carriage at the entrance to the Embassy, sped silently past the astonished footman, and approached her ladyship. It was Madame la Présidente, pallid, with a fever-light in her eyes.

"My dear," she said in trembling accents, "I like you, and I have come, wrongly perhaps, to warn you. You will be called upon to leave France before many hours have sped. I tell you, that you may be prepared. Farewell!"

Without another word of explanation, she quitted her astounded hostess, and was rapidly driven off.

CHAPTER II.

A Council of the Powers.

During the same night a strange scene was being enacted at Versailles.

On leaving the British Embassy so soon after the conclusion of dinner, Lord Eskdale's guests entered their carriages. Quiet directions were given to their coachmen, and the vehicles turned into the magnificent avenue of the Champs Elysées, already radiant with the freshness of early spring. They sped swiftly along past the Arc de Triomphe, and entered the Bois de Boulogne. It was scarcely ten o'clock when they passed Longchamps, on which the white tents of the soldiers, who had that day been reviewed, shone beneath the moon. Soon Passy was left behind, and the hoofs of the horses clattered along the deserted streets of the village of Versailles. The carriages drove through the great gates of the Court of Honour, and pulled up before a narrow doorway, where their occupants got out.

In a tapestried room above a small group of men awaited them. Here, in the pleasure palace built by the great Louis, where he feasted with his mistresses and learnt the fatal news of Blenheim that shattered his ambitions—where Napoleon, too, met his Ministers after his brilliant campaign in Italy, and rested before making his last dash to Waterloo—a grim and unexampled Council was being held.

There were scarcely twenty men present, but each was a figure of commanding importance in European politics. The military and diplomatic strength of a whole continent might be said to be represented here at its best. It was a strange alliance, hereditary foes meeting in friendly union and Ministers who had for years schemed against each other with all the artifices of cunning at last linked together in a common purpose.

No small issue could have achieved this miracle. Before these men was set the hardest and most momentous task that ever perplexed the strength and wisdom of the world.

The President of the French Republic took the chair at the head of the table. Opposite him was General Caprivi, the Chancellor of Germany. To right and left were M. Hanotaux and Count Holbach, the French and German Foreign Ministers, and several of the chief diplomats of both countries. Near the President sat a tall and distinguished-looking man, with hair of iron grey, and a grave impenetrable countenance, who seldom spoke, but at whom, from time to time, those around him glanced uneasily. It was General Gourko, the trusted emissary of the Tsar of Russia. Other faces, too, known in every Court in Europe, and feared in many, might be seen.

Each one was grave and anxious. It might have been thought that some guilty bond held them in artificial union. Distrust seemed to peer from their eyes as a chance remark called up the lurking fires of hereditary hate. Yet there was a respectful silence when the President opened the conference.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I have just paid the last official visit of a President of France to the representative of the Court of England. The armies of Germany and France are on the point of success. To-morrow before noon we shall be at war with England!"

He turned, with a true French love of dramatic effect, to mark the effect of these words. The only response was a grave bow from Count Caprivi.

"The details we, of course, all know. It is enough for me to say that they have been efficiently carried out. England is secure and confident. Her ambassador is occupied in the dance. Her navy is distributed over the globe. Her army is in India. And yet at Brest and

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Bremerhaven there are the invincible navies of the two allied powers, together with transports that will carry to the shores of England a mighty army. To-morrow we shall land upon those shores. Within a week we shall be at the gates of London. There is nothing that can withstand us. It may be that the instinctive courage of the English race may lead to a defence of London. We may not be able to occupy the city for three weeks. But I believe you are with me when I express the conviction that within a month the British Empire will be shattered, and that the flags of the chief united powers of Europe will float from the dome of the Man ion House!"

A murmur of approval followed the recital, and then Count Caprivi interrupted:

"Time is precious, and we have much to settle. The destruction of Great Britain is a matter of simple generalship. We need not waste time in estimating the number of days, or the details of military occupation. We may regard the British Empire as already struck off the map. But I must remind you that several points remain yet to be settled in our joint treaty. How is Great Britain to be dismembered, and how are we to share her dependencies?"

Here M. Hanotaux rose and walked behind the chair by the President. Touching a cord that hung down from a roller upon the wall, he liberated a large map of the world which covered the whole space. It had many curious lines upon it and strange colours. Across the British Islands were written the words: "Under joint government."

It was the map of the world as it was intended to be after the collapse of England. The strange colours were the emblems of the foreign powers that had bidden for her colonies. The lines were marks to show how, in the greed of cruel appetite, the confederates had arranged to share some fair possession and split up a fertile country into fragments.

"Here," said the President, "is a *précis* of what we have already arranged. You will see," pointing to the map, "that Canada falls to France, East Africa to Germany, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa are governed by a joint board for the profit of the allies. Malta and Aden are dismantled. Dover is held by a joint garrison. England herself," he concluded, "will be governed by a military council in the interests of France and Germany for a time at least. We are not inclined to be merciless, and if she behaves herself, we may be induced later on to grant a limited form of home rule, which will necessitate a sanction for all legislative measures from a combined Board of Administrators meeting alternately at Berlin and Paris. We shall also occupy Ireland to watch movements in England and stamp out any signs of rebellion. Turkey and the Egyptian question can be settled satisfactorily at a later date."

"There yet remains," said the German War Minister, "Gibraltar, India, West Africa, and West Indies, the Chinese possessions, and a number of smaller but yet difficult points."

This observation produced a sudden silence. Secure in their belief that England was already a conquered nation, each delegate was wholly engaged in selfish schemes for the aggrandisement of his own country.

An eager discussion then arose, in which no one seemed prepared to come to a point. And at times there passed looks of malice and anger ill-suppressed as some slight word lit up hideous depths of selfishness or jealousy.

At last M. Hanotaux observed:

"We might begin with India. It is a large and splendid territory. France at least——"

At this point General Gourko's impassive face relaxed. Turning to the President, he said:

"There is no need to discuss that point. India is claimed by Russia. Is there anyone who disputes her claim?"

M. Hanotaux started—and turned red.

"A huge plum!" he exclaimed. "Do you want the lion's share, sir, without doing the lion's part?"

"M. le President," said Gourko calmly, paying no heed, "there can be no discussion on this head. My instructions are final and peremptory. Is it said we are not fighting for our spoil? Is it not agreed that Russia's part is to hang back and make no move till the moment comes—if ever such a moment needs to come? You forget, perhaps, that it is you, and not we, that have demanded this blow. You have been forced to action by the decline of your commerce, the decay of your trade, your imperative need of fresh markets, your lack of colonies. England has seized all that is fairest on earth, and you can no longer exist against so huge a moncpoly. You are both in desperate straits, and the imperative voice of your suffering peoples forces you to close with this all-devouring race which is checking your growth, crushing your strength, and throttling your prosperity. That is why you have formed this alliance, is it not?"

He paused, but there was no answer.

"Russia, however," he continued, "has no such need. She has rich and fertile lands. Siberia alone adds a second empire to her throne. What she wants is, no doubt, a sea-coast. That sea-coast is India. If Russia helps you to secure the success of schemes she is not interested in, she demands that sea-coast. Gentlemen, you cannot oppose the resistless necessity of things. Russia must and will secure for herself the Indian Empire."

His words fell inexorable and unanswerable. The quiescence of Russia was essential to England's overthrow. It was essential to the peaceful division of spoil. Large though the price she asked, there could be no refusal.

Then rose a debate upon Gibraltar, and it well nigh brought to a close the temporary alliance between the powers. That impregnable fortress was coveted by both. But Count Holbach had not come unprepared for this. He had, that morning, had a long interview with the Spanish Minister, and it was in his power to outwit his French comrade.

He proposed that Gibraltar be returned to Spain.

To his joy, the French Minister accepted this method of settlement as the most satisfactory way out of the difficulty. If he could have seen a letter bearing the official stamp from Madrid that even then lay in M. Hanotaux's pocket, he would perhaps have been less satisfied with himself.

And thus the Conference went on, and by slow degrees all of the British Empire that remained was divided between the two countries. What was left of England was a crippled island under the heel of a despotic military government, a tributary state of less consequence than Bulgaria, and a people crushed, ruined, and enslaved.

"One point only," observed Caprivi, as the Council was about to rise. "Germany, of course, claims Belgium."

The Frenchmen started to their feet at this amazing announcement.

"Impossible!" cried the President.

"Not so," replied Caprivi calmly. "It is no doubt a prize of value, but we are prepared to pay for it."

M. Hanotaux turned upon him a look of disdain.

"And what payment do you presume to consider adequate?" he said.

The German put his finger carelessly upon a map which lay on the table. Then quietly:

"We offer Alsace and Lorraine!"

It was a startling *dénouement* of the grim drama of hatred and selfishness that had just been played. But the German statesman knew his men.

Before he returned to Paris that night he placed in his pocket a signed *précis*, in which Belgium figured as a German dependency.

It was almost dawn when the Council rose.

"Adieu, gentlemen," said the President with a bow. "When we next meet, it will be in Whitehall."

(To be continued.)

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A SANE LUNATIC.

He was considered eccentric by most of his acquaintances, and by others a mild sort of lunatic. Indeed, it was rumoured that he had spent a portion of his life in a private asylum, and had been discharged as incurable, but harmless.

He was apparently wealthy, and spent his money lavishly. Being myself possessed of a goodly share of this world's goods, it was not the man's prodigality that attracted me, but his eccentricity. Underlying it I discerned a brain of unusual power, which I thought was somewhat hampered by some great sorrow which I considered the key to his many peculiarities.

His favourite topic of conversation was psychic phenomena, upon which subject he was seemingly well versed, a fact not to be wondered at, as he informed me that he had spent several years in India devoting his entire attention to the study of this subject. On this account I dubbed him "Doctor," and he seemed to prefer it to his own name.

Having hinted somewhat vaguely regarding his eccentricities, or peculiarities, call them what you will, it would seem pertinent to here offer some explanation regarding this point, upon which the main thread of my story hinges.

Many times, while discussing his favourite topic over a small bottle, or being otherwise happily engaged, has he suddenly uttered a sharp cry of pain, and suddenly left me with no explanation, nor did he subsequently offer one. Only once did I question him on the subject, at which time he made it so apparent that the query was distasteful to him that I ever after held my peace.

He also had a way of suddenly leaving town without giving me the slightest notice, or advising me as to his destination or intended time of return. Many times has he casually strolled into my rooms, after long absence, and informed me that he had just returned from Australia, Siberia, or perhaps some place of which I had never heard. I honestly believe he had been in every civilised and uncivilised country on the globe. He had no intimate acquaintances other than myself, and expressed the desire not to be presented to anyone except those with whom he was unavoidably thrown into contact.

Late one afternoon I received an invitation from him to dine, and, later, go to the theatre, which I gladly accepted, and at the appointed time presented myself at his rooms. Handing my card to his man, I was shown into the library, the servant disappearing into an inner room, from whence he soon returned, and without offering any explanation as to when I might expect to see his master, disappeared into another apartment. This, was the first time I had ever seen this fellow, and I learnt later that he was dumb, which fact did not much surprise me, knowing, as I did, "Doctor's" antipathy to having anyone about him of a questioning turn of mind.

The hangings, rugs, furniture, and wall decorations of the room in which I was seated had been brought from every known land, and the ten or fifteen minutes that elapsed before "Doctor's" appearance were well spent in admiring the many curios which my friend had collected during his extended travels over the world.

At length he came, with an apology for having kept me waiting, He seemed to be in exceptionally good spirits, and remarked that he had never felt better in his life.

"Do you know, Duckworth," he said, "I have been looking forward with unaccustomed pleasure to our visit to the theatre this evening, as it is the first time for ten years that I have dared to go to a place of public amusement, and undoubtedly you surmise the reason why."

"Well, Doctor, I am glad you are in such good spirits," I answered.

This was the first time that he had ever referred in any way to his "eccentricity," and I was in hopes that he would go on and confide in me more fully, and his next remark almost convinced me that he would.

"I have had a premonition," he went on, "that I am to have peace and enjoyment for this night at least, and propose to make the most of it."

Hereupon he changed the subject; and try as adroitly as I might, I could not bring him back to his original theme.

We went to the play, which was of absorbing interest to both of us. Nothing occurred to mar our enjoyment until we were leaving the theatre.

"Doctor" was walking immediately in front of me, and we had just reached the street, when, suddenly throwing up his arms and uttering a sharp cry of pain, he fell prone upon the pavement. I was upon my knee at his side in an instant, and found him perfectly conscious but utterly unable to rise. His face was set and pale, and he was evidently suffering excruciating pain.

"Call a cab, quick," he whispered, "and don't mention a doctor. Take me to my rooms as rapidly as possible."

A bystander called a cab and helped me place my companion inside. As we rode rapidly towards my friend's apartments he remarked, half to himself, "A broken leg this time. Good for six weeks at least."

Upon my request to be allowed to stop for a surgeon on the way, he flatly refused, and begged me to take him directly to his rooms and leave him in the hands of his man Andrews, who thoroughly understood the situation.

When we got him upstairs I noticed that he had lost consciousness, and as Andrews had left the room I took occasion to examine both my friend's legs; and, although I had heard him aver that his leg was broken, I was utterly unable to find the slightest bruise or damage of any description. The man's limbs were as sound as my own.

Just as I was concluding my examination and was still bending over the unconscious man, I was suddenly roughly seized from the rear and quickly drawn back from the couch. As I turned to resent this treatment I beheld Andrews bowing low before me with an expression of abject apology on his intelligent face. I asked him what he meant by handling me so unceremoniously, and by signs and looks, which he had a wonderful faculty of making one understand, he told me, as plainly as I could have expressed by speech, that it would be his master's earnest desire to have me leave them alone, as he thoroughly understood the case. He then wrote upon a tablet which he always carried with him, the following:

"Please do not call again until master sends for you."

"Doctor," having at various times informed me that he placed implicit confidence in his servant, I quickly decided it was best to accede to Andrew's request, and took my leave.

On the evening of the fifth day after the "accident," I was in my den busily engaged in arranging some papers when there was a knock at my door. It was Andrews with a note from his master, which read as follows:

Dear Duckworth.—I trust you do not feel offended at not hearing from me before, but the fact is, I considered it best to be left alone with Andrews until somewhat recovered. The delicate tact and silent sympathy you have shown towards me during the several inexplicable occurrences which you have been unfortunate enough to witness, have convinced me that you are a man who can be thoroughly trusted, and I have decided to make clear to you, as far as I am able, the strange influence of which I am the helpless victim.

If you have no other engagement, kindly call this evening. If possible return with Andrews.

Cordially yours,
"Doctor."

It was but the work of a moment to change my coat, snatch up my hat and gloves, and signify to Andrews my readiness to accompany him to his master.

I found "Doctor" seated in an easy-chair with his right leg reposing on a pillow supported by a stool.

"Good evening, Duckworth," he said, "I am very glad you found it convenient to come."

"I am very glad you sent for me," I remarked. "How is your injured leg?"

"As well as might be expected," he answered drily. "Andrews informed me that he found you examining my understandings on the night of the accident, and what you found or rather did not find has undoubtedly imbued you with some misgivings regarding my sanity; and on this account, among others, I am about to give you a short and concise sketch of my life, and would request that you keep it a profound secret."

I bowed without speaking.

"You have shown considerable interest in my views on psychology, and this is another reason for my making you acquainted with my life.

"I was born in a small town in the south of England in the autumn of 1853. My mother died when I was in my third year, and from then up to the time I graduated my life was uneventful and happy. My father, being wealthy, humoured me in every way, and my future life promised to be rosy.

"About a month after my return home from the University my troubles began. I was very fond of riding, and one afternoon had just returned from a long ride in the country, and was proceeding at an easy canter down to the stables, when suddenly I received a severe blow on the back of my head which knocked me from my horse. I almost immediately became unconscious and knew nothing until an hour after, when I opened my eyes to find my father and the doctor bending over me.

"I was lying in bed in my own room, and upon opening my eyes my father and myself almost simultaneously asked 'What happened?' I insisted that I had been struck a crushing blow on the back of the head, but my father averred such was not the case, as he saw me fall from my horse without any apparent cause and ran up to find me lying unconscious.

"I was suffering from a bursting headache, but there was not even a bruise on my head, although it was sore to the touch.

"Some three weeks later my father was taken with pneumonia, and within ten days had passed away. I will pass over the two months following my father's death and relate the circumstances of the next attack of my peculiar malady.

"I was seated in the library engaged in arranging certain affairs which had been neglected since my father's death, when suddenly my left hand, which had been resting on the table, was forced down flat as if by some heavy crushing weight, and for the space of several minutes I was absolutely unable to move it. I threw myself back in my chair and with all the force at my command endeavoured to release my hand from the table, but without avail. With my eyes fixed upon my flattened fingers, from which all the blood seemed to have been forced, the remembrance of the first visitation of the unseen force flashed across my mind. Up to this time I had felt no pain, but soon the pressure began to relax and I was able to release my hand, and then terrible pains began to shoot through my fingers and arm. That lasted for two hours.

"I knew of an eminent specialist on nervous and mental diseases and called upon him. He expressed himself as believing that my trouble was an extreme nervous affection of which he had known but two cases before, and advised me to travel, interest myself in the outside world and keep my mind off myself as much as possible.

"I decided to take the doctor's advice and travel, although I had not much faith in his diagnosis. Having decided on this plan I returned home, made arrangements for an extended absence, and the next week sailed for New York. I visited every corner of both the Americas, but all this was of no avail, as at various intervals my strange attacks have returned in ever-changing form. I have experienced a broken rib without the usual accompanying ocular evidence, of which my present condition is a parallel case. I have felt the grip of powerful unseen hands about my throat, and nearly choked to death in consequence; have been stabbed in the back, and experienced in various other ways the force of some unseen and inexplicable power, which I felt would eventually cause my mysterious passing away.

"After spending five years in America I returned to England. I then became interested in spiritualism and psychological research, and soon became a firm believer in the latter doctrine, which I have since coupled with many original theories of my own.

"I believe in the presence of a fluid, universally diffused, which animates all living beings on the face of this globe, and that the actions of these beings are due to their own individual organisations. I also believe, that two individuals of the same general temperament, physical and mental organisation, will, through the medium of this universal fluid, be affected by each other in various ways; that in different cases this influence may tend entirely in one direction, which in my case is that of the transference of the sensation of physical suffering. I believe that ninety per cent at least of the so-called lunatics in this world are not in reality wrong mentally, but are influenced in this way.

"I am practically convinced that there is living somewhere a man whose aches and pains I am obliged to endure, and the one aim of my existence is to find this

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individual and if possible attach him to my service and keep him out of harm's way, if he chances to be in a walk of life that will make it feasible: if not, some other plan must be found.

"It probably occurs to you that, considering the vast population and area of our world, my task does not present the slightest probability of success, and for many years I laboured under the same apprehension; but now I believe I am on the right track.

"During my extensive travels I have found that in some localities where I have spent considerable time I have been practically free from the influence, while in others it has been very strong. After carefully considering this phase of the manifestations, I have arrived at the conclusion that the closer proximity of my man, the more potent the influence, and in consequence my field of search has narrowed itself down to the city of Manchester and its immediate surroundings.

"Now as to the sort of man I am looking for, In all probability he in no way resembles me in appearance; the little finger of his left hand is missing; he has a scar from a cut on his left cheek and one on his back under the shoulder blade a little to the left of the spine. These are the remains of certain accidents which have befallen me. At present he is laid up with a broken leg, and in consequence I am practically in the same fix. I believe I shall find him to be of exactly my own age, and considering the number of wounds and broken bones in the case, he is probably following some hazardous occupation.

"He may be an honest working man, or what is more likely, a criminal. Now I surmise that our broken legs are not so bad as they might be, and if he gets proper care, we shall be up and about in three weeks from now, and I then propose to go North and ferret him out, and what will please me next to finding my man will be to have you accompany me."

"Doctor" here concluded his story, and it is hardly necessary to inform the reader that it left me for several minutes in a state of speechless wonder, for it was the strangest recital that had ever come to my notice outside pure fiction.

"I'll go with you," was my first remark after somewhat recovering my senses, whereupon "Doctor" grasped my hand without a word, but his face spoke volumes.

It was now nearing midnight, and I took my leave after arranging to spend some time with him each day in maturing our plans, as far as was possible, with the material we had to work upon.

At the end of the three weeks "Doctor" informed me that he was ready to start, and two days after we were on our way to Manchester, where we eventually arrived and engaged two adjoining rooms at one of the smaller and less frequented hotels.

Andrews was left behind in care of "Doctor's" apartments.

We spent several weeks hunting in every quarter of the city and the surrounding neighbourhood for an individual bearing the marks as described by "Doctor," but with no success; however my friend assured me that we were on the right track, as he had experienced various sensations which, in his mind, pointed conclusively to the near proximity of the object of our search.

"Doctor" was not an early riser, but on the other hand I was, and one morning while awaiting his appearance, it occurred to me that, inasmuch as "Doctor" expected to find his man among the criminal class, and as we had visited every known haunt of the criminals at large in the city, would it not be a good idea to carry our investigations to the prison?

Then my companion sent word that he was suffering from headache and must keep his room. I therefore decided to carry out my plan alone. I went straight to the chief of police and told him the kind of criminal I was trying to find. He looked at me for a moment and then said:

"You must mean Wilson?"

"Who is he? What is he like?" I asked eagerly.

"Wilson is about forty-three. Height five feet ten inches. Hair black. Eyes black. Scar on left cheek from nose to ear. Scar under left shoulder blade. Small finger missing from left hand," said the chief, as though reading from a book.

At last we were on the track, for here was the description of a man who answered all requirements to the letter.

I asked the chief if he could give me any further information regarding this man.

"Certainly," he answered. "I see you are not quite posted in the affairs of Manchester. He was arrested for murder about two months ago and in an attempt to escape he broke his right leg. He was tried, found guilty and pays the penalty at ten o'clock this morning. If——"

But I waited to hear no more; rushing from the place like a madman, I jumped into a cab and shouted instructions to the driver to drive with all speed to the hotel and not to spare the whip, at the same time glancing at my watch. It was just five minutes to ten.

Should I reach the hotel in time? And what could I do if I did?

Ghastly visions flashed before my eyes as we rattled through the streets. The cab stopped. I jumped out and rushed up to my friend's room; throwing open the door, I beheld "Doctor" standing in the centre of the room.

The sight of him held me spell-bound. He was standing as rigid and straight as a post, feet together, arms close to his sides, and on his face an expression of agony such as I hope never to see on a human face again.

"Thank Heaven you've come," he groaned, "I've been standing here for about five minutes, bound and ——"

I shudder with horror as I recall what then occurred.

His words died in his throat, his body seemed almost to leave the floor, and then all his muscles relaxed, and he pitched forward on his face.

I quickly raised and placed him on the bed. His face wore an expression of profound peace, and at last his troubles were at an end.

Wilson had paid the penalty of his crimes and——

"What's the verdict, gentlemen?" asked the Coroner.

"Heart disease," came the prompt reply.

E. B. R.

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SAM'S RIVAL.

"So you never heard of Myrtle's ghost, eh?" said Jack Catlin, tilting his chair back and snickering most aggravatingly.

"Don't understand you," said Jack's brother Sam, reddening. "I suppose Myrtle has a ghost. All men are mortal, so are women. When they die they 'give up the ghost,' I believe. So Myrtle must have a ghost to give up."

"Oh, yes," said Jack, "but Myrtle has another ghost all to herself—one that she hasn't given up yet—I suppose she wouldn't tell you about it, though. But you might ask, just to see what she'd say."

Sam Catlin was uneasy about that ghost. There was something of an insinuation in his brother's words. He became more uneasy after leaving his brother, and decided to call upon Myrtle Brooks at once.

"Why, Sam," the young woman exclaimed, "I never expected to see you here at this time of the day! Sit down, won't you?"

"No," said Sam gruffly, "I don't suppose you did."

"What's the matter, Sam? What makes you so cross?"

"Cross? I cross? I'm not cross. I only came to ask you something, that's all."

"Oh!" And the red of the two pretty cheeks spread indefinitely. "Ask me something! I wonder what you've got to ask me now."

"It won't take you very long to answer," said Sam looking up from under his eyebrows, while he kept tapping the toe of his shoe with his cane.

Myrtle made no answer. She was smiling and looking at the tips of her fingers in the awkward way some girls have of seeking relief from a sudden palpitation of the heart.

"You won't mind answering, I suppose?" Sam asked.

"No; that is if I can, Sam. Go on."

"I want to know"—(Myrtle's head was beating like the works of a very large watch)—"I want to know about—that—that ghost of yours."

Myrtle's expression changed. The blush was still there, deeper if anything, but the half embarrassed, half happy smile was gone.

"Who told you?" she exclaimed defiantly. "Who told you that story, Sam?"

"Oh, fortunately, if I have to be absent, there are people who—who are friendly enough to tell me what has been going on, you know."

"Friendly? What has 'friendly' to do with it? What do you mean by this, Sam?"

"Tell me, first, what you mean. I want to know about that ghost of yours."

"And I want to know, first, who has any right to tell you—to—to meddle in my affairs."

She was getting angry, too.

"Then you won't tell me about that ghost?" Sam asked, rising from the chair and taking his hat, with an air of grim determination.

"It isn't that I mind telling you, but—what have you heard?" the girl asked, rising at the same time.

"What is there to hear?"

"Nothing. That is——"

"Yes? 'That is?' 'That is'—what?"

"Nothing but some silly talk."

"Silly talk always has some foundation, Miss Brooks."

The girl stood biting her lip, seeming to be mentally occupied in debating some difficult problem.

"I don't know whether I ought to tell you or not," she said at last, turning a defiant look upon him.

"Just as you please, Miss Brooks," and Sam moved towards the door.

"Of course, it's just as I please," she burst out, losing all self-restraint. "What do you mean by talking to me about your 'friendly people' and 'what has been going on?' I don't know that I ever gave you any right to talk to me like that."

"Oh, no," the young man sniffed. "And I don't know that you ever will, either. Good morning, Miss Brooks."

And he was gone.

Myrtle threw herself face downwards on the sofa as soon as she heard the front door close, and sobbed. She and Sam were not engaged, but everybody in her family and in his fully expected that these two would either become engaged or else marry without the tiresome prelude of a formal engagement.

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Myrtle sat sobbing with her forehead against the back of the sofa.

Sam Catlin walked at a good, brisk, high-tempered rate in the direction of his brother's office.

He arrived at the office ten minutes after Jack had gone out to lunch. So, guided by the instructions of the office-boy, he made off for the restaurant where Jack was accustomed to eat.

Sam's two week's stay at home had begun only two days before this, and he had not yet shaken hands with all the people he knew there, and who were supposed to be glad to see him again after a year's absence. Many such passed him as he stalked through the street to the restaurant, but he was in no mood for greetings, and only returned curt, hurried nods.

As he pushed the swinging door open, a slim, pale young man, with a cigarette in the left corner of his mouth, was all but toppled over by Sam's momentum.

"Where the——" Sam began.

"That you, Sam?" the pale young man interrupted him, saving his hat with one hand, and his cigarette with the other.

It was Myrtle Brooks' adoring cousin, Welby.

"Oh, how-d'you-do?" Sam said hurriedly. "Beg pardon. Glad to see you."

And he went in, leaving Welby to straighten himself and wonder what was wrong.

"What's the matter with you, Sam?" Jack asked, as Sam violently occupied the chair opposite. "You nearly ran over poor Welby, didn't you?"

Sam took up the bill of fare and looked at it mechanically.

"What's the matter with me? H'm, question is, what's the matter with him? Can't see where he's going. Smokes too many cigarettes. H'm. He's as pale as a——"

And then Sam suddenly dropped the bill of fare and stared dumbly at the pepper box and the sauce bottle.

His brother looked up quietly, too busy satisfying his own hunger to pay much attention.

"Pale?" he said. "Yes. Have some mutton. Where have you been?"

Sam grunted his order to the waiter and continued to stare at the condiments.

Jack steadily continued his meal, only stopping long enough to remark. "You did need rest, Sam. That's a fact. Yes, you are pale."

No reply.

Presently that abominable smile of Jack's began to be in evidence.

"By the way," he said, "did you find out anything about Myrtle's ghost?"

Sam laid down his knife and fork.

"Look here, Jack," he said. "I don't want to have an unpleasantness in my own family. Yes, I have found out about—it. Now, please don't tell me any more about that ghost. I've had quite enough."

The smile was gone. Jack was staring wide-eyed at his brother. The lunch was finished in silence.

Sam Catlin went home, and straightway wrote as follows:

My Dear Miss Brooks.—I have to apologise to you for my rude and unreasonable curiosity of this morning. I acknowledge that you have given me no right to insist upon explanations of any kind from you. Please to pardon this indiscretion of mine and forget it, as well as all that may have gone before it, and led up to it.

By accident, I have found the answer to the question with which I offended you.

Very sincerely your friend and well-wisher,

Samuel Catlin.

Myrtle threw herself face downwards on the sofa.

The answer came next day.

My Dear Mr. Catlin.—I hasten to say that your apology is sincerely accepted. I must also ask you to forgive my outburst of temper.

It is incomprehensible to me how you can have found out the answer to your question by accident. Your brother, Mr. Catlin, I believe, and your mother, I think, both know the story of what they have taken a delight in calling "my ghost." It happened more than a month ago, when you were ill in Manchester.

Mrs. Catlin is quite at liberty to tell you all you wish to know about it——

That was as far as Sam read. He went and demanded an explanation of his mother.

"Why, Sam," Mrs. Catlin laughed. "I should have thought Myrtle would have told you about that herself. I know she scared the wits out of me at the time—sending round here at ten o'clock at night to ask if I had any news of you. You go and ask her. She'll tell you."

"Then it isn't Welby?"

His mother laughed, and Sam, in his impetuous way, rushed to Myrtle's home and found her in the garden.

"You deserve to be told not a word," she said, very severely. "You made such a donkey of yourself. Sam—you were ill—up there—and one night, when I was sitting playing the piano, I thought I heard you whistle that part where the nightingale comes in—just as you used to"—sobs here. "And just then Gyp gave one of his little sudden barks"—more sobs. "And I thought you were standing behind me"—sobs and confusion and kisses.

"Then I'm your ghost, darling?"

Myrtle's face was smothered against as solid a chest as any ghost could reasonably envy.

"Now, Myrtle, don't call me an idiot all the rest of my life. I thought it was your cousin Welby. He is so pale, you know, dear."

And incontinently, the merriest kind of laughter broke in upon the sobs.

Charles Stone.

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THE GLADIATOR.

A Tale of the Eastern Empire.

By GEORGE C. WALLIS.

PART THE THIRD.

"Through the Meshes of the Net."

CHAPTER I.

The Pirates.

Of the life that Rhesus led in the galley, it ever irked him to tell afterwards, so seared was his soul with the horror of it. Yet it is needful for the proper progress of this strange story that something be said of those evil days. How long he pulled the oar in that reeking hold, amid its dirt and darkness and infamy, he could never quite recall, but it must have taken at least five of the best years out of his life; taken them out, had almost been written, as though they had never been. But the memory of them remained over with Rhesus, hanging over his mind as the shadow of a thick cloud on a sunny day, and who shall say how many years were missing at his life's end?

Some time in the next day—or it may have been the next but one—the breeze failed, and the master roused the convicts to their work by a gentle application of his scourge. They were creeping down the pleasant waters of the Hellespont then, having just left Propontis behind, and now and then, as he bent and strained to the oar, Rhesus caught a glimpse through the narrow opening of the heights of Thrace. Mount Olympus, clothed in its eternal snow, he could have seen, had he been free; and many another well-known spot, rich in memories and in legends of the vivid past, along those fertile and historic shores.

Down the Hellespont they pulled the heavy craft, with much blasphemy and sweating of blood, and passing the historic hill of Ida, came out into the Egean. The rest of the day they toiled through the heat and the dampness, naked save for a loin-cloth, each one of them consumed with thirst and madness, like chained beasts; and when night came, on a choppy sea, they lay down in their fetters, and in that stifling ship, fœtid with the breathing of a hundred wretched compeers in crime and misery, must sleep.

Each day thereafter was like that; sometimes, when the sea was steady and the heat not so intense, a little more endurable; sometimes, when she lay becalmed, and the sun baked them as in a pitiless furnace, a little worse. Rhesus' hair grew grey in streaks, and all unkempt, his skin was drawn and puckered as an old man's; those few years put twenty to his age. Even the slave-sailors who worked the galley had some pity upon him and were less harsh to him than to the others—though that was an ill turn after all, so bitterly galley-rowers hate each other for a preference—and once or twice the captain had him brought on deck when he swooned away.

But Rhesus was a pagan, under the ban alike of Church and State, so the captain fingered his ivory crucifix and swore by his favourite saints and sent the prisoner back, thanking God that the law allowed neither Jew nor Heathen to own a Christian slave, and having thus stifled the generous impulse within him, went to his wine.

So the weary years passed on, as a evil nightmare long prolonged, until a break came in the monotony and found Rhesus a fresher and a lighter, if a worse fate. They had traded long between Berytus and Athens and Byzantium, and long escaped the prowling pirates who infested the sea, but in an evil hour for him the captain pointed his prow for further afield and ran for Alexandria. On that voyage his luck failed; he came away with a heavy loss and many goods on his hands; and one stormy evening, as they ran, bare-poled, before a strong gale, a pirate vessel loomed across their track.

There was scant mercy shown to merchants who resisted, and but that he was in an angry mood he would have yielded and so saved his skin. But he chose to flee, and all through the dark hours the toilers in the hold heard the hurried stamping on the deck, and felt upon their sore hides the frequent sting of the lash.

At dawn the captain finding escape impossible, these had a spell of peace as the ships closed and the robbers boarded. There was a moment of suspense, in which flashes of hope shot across the dark horizon; and then, as a dozen pirates came down the hatch and severed their chains and put knives into their hands, a moment of frenzy that turned the ship into a living Hades.

For those rowers were mad with the sudden liberty, eager as wild animals for the blood of their late masters, and bursting upon the latter as they stood at bay in the bow, pulled them down and tore them limb from limb, exulting in their savage strength; and not one was spared, not one was left alive. Then, reckless, insane with the lust of freedom and revenge, they turned to the pirates and rushed at them, a frantic, howling mob. But these were tougher fellows and used to such work, and defending themselves calmly until their assailants had spent their spasm of fury, punished them thereafter so that most crept back, cowed and beaten, to the hold. But Rhesus did not go below. He stood, knife in hand, near the mast, and threatened to slay the first that touched him, vowing that nothing would make him go down again.

"He fought well, certainly," said the chief of the pirates to his men. "It would perhaps pay us better to take him as one of us, instead of wasting a man or two to be rid of him. What say you, slave?"

"Anything but the oars!" cried Rhesus. "Though it likes me not to join such villains, I consent!"

"He has some courage, I vow!" cried the chief. "He shall go with us."

So Rhesus became a pirate, a freebooter, a despoiler of merchants, a scourge of the sea, and added another to the several avocations that had occupied his life.

Having scuttled the captive ship with the miserable rowers aboard, they put off from the scene of evil success and sped swiftly westward before the impulse of the still high gale. The rest of that day and the following night, despite his weakness from the strife and long captivity, they put Rhesus through the rounds of work that each aboard must do in turn. What matter that his eyes were drowsy and his head swam and his knees trembled under him? What matter that the ship pitched and tossed on the storm-shaken sea, and out of the blackness of the wild night came a deluge of rain? He had bought his life and freedom at a price, and must pay the penalty; and when at last the wind abated somewhat and the heavy cloud-banks drifted away before the red onset of the rising sun, he dropped from sheer fatigue, and on the bare deck, his back to the bulwark, fell asleep and passed into a land of hideous dreams

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The rough work and evil deeds the pirates committed thereafter sorted ill with the better nature of Rhesus, but the memory of wilful Eutasia kept his protests back, and made the wealth he got so wrongly seem sacred in his eyes. Surely none of the crew thought of him as less scrupulous than themselves. As daring, as careless; as ready for fray or frolic, for friend or foe, he assuredly was; so none suspected his secret loathing, none his secret desire—a desire, he began to fear, that would never be gratified.

But time in its circling course brings all things round, and in a manner he least expected, out of what he thought a dire misfortune, a way was made for Rhesus to the goal of his longing, a way that once begun seemed to lead straight thereto, as though carved through the thicket of circumstance by the sweeping axe of a god.

He kept wide-open ears to the floating gossip of the sea and the littoral towns, and heard much of matters in Constantinople—of the genius of Belisarius and his thankless treatment at the hands of Justinian and Theodora—and worst of all, at the hands of Antonina, his faithless wife—of his Persian victories; of his splendid triumphs in Africa, where he had captured Carthage and taken Gelimer prisoner, and so added a Vandal kingdom to the empire in one campaign; and of the new task that the greedy despots set him—the reconquering of Rome.

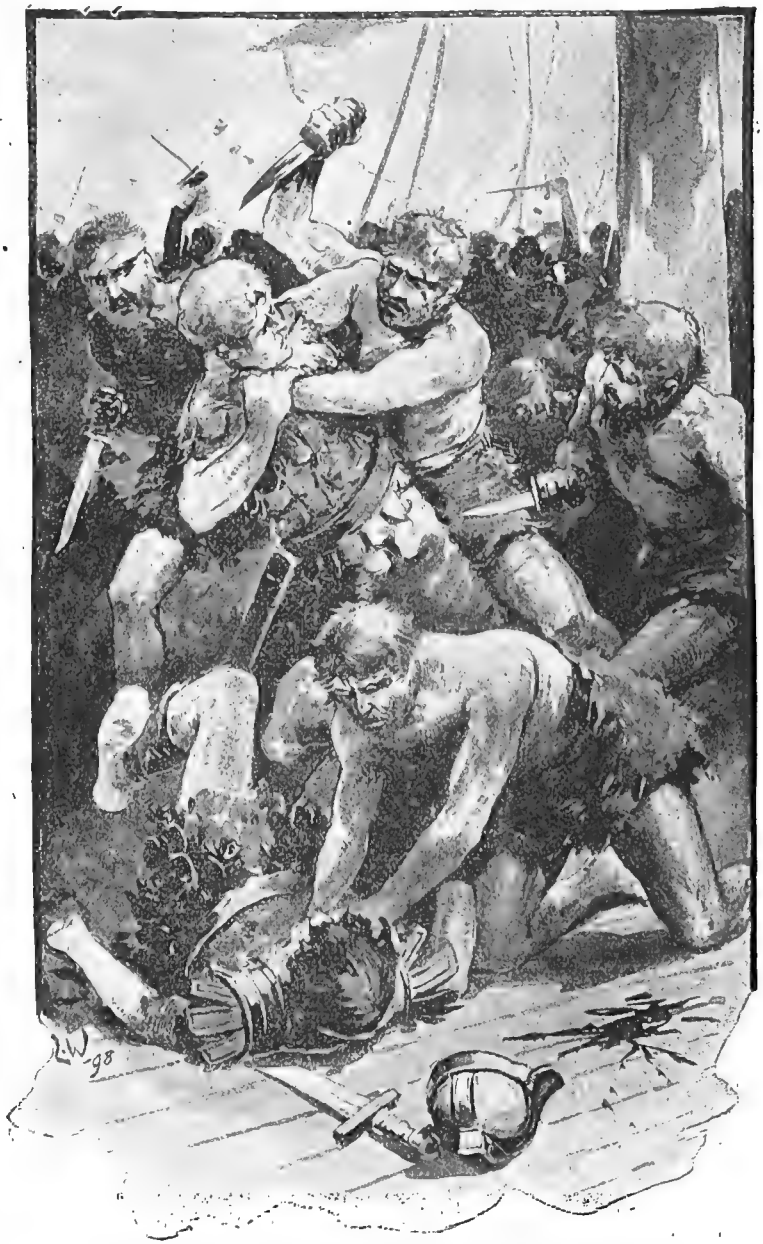
Had the pirates been equally attentive to this last news, or known the energy of Belisarius as Rhesus knew it, they would not have lingered amongst the isles of Greece so long that warm season. As it was, they crept out from the sheltering lee of a high bluff one day to find themselves right in the path of the great Byzantine fleet, and being discovered by the look-out of one of the brigantines, knew that the end of their roving days had come. They ran for it at first, but the light ships went three leagues to their two, and seven of them coming in pursuit, caught them easily. Then the robbers let down their anchors and prepared to die.

The enemy closed round warily, knowing their desperation, demanded their object in flight, and asked if they would surrender and go before the general.

"Tell your general," roared the pirate chief, with an imprecation in the names of all the saints, "that we please ourselves where and when we come to bay. We will go before him, without further parley—when we are all slain! We are not yet ready for the dungeons of the capital or the rowing holds of your ships!"

With that the seven ships closed in, and the fight began. As for Rhesus, a wild hope had risen and taken hold of him, and whilst they fought he held back and leant upon the mast, his sword in its sheath and his arms folded. The wild sea-dogs gave a good report of themselves ere they finished, and the manner of their ending evoked in Rhesus an admiration that their living could not; but they were only a handful to the troops that ship after ship sent on board, and presently it was over, and Rhesus alone was left.

The victors, surprised at his inactivity, asked grimly if he preferred a slow and ignoble death to a swift and hot one; whether he would go before the general as one who had not even the courage of his wickedness, or whether he would be onded as he stood. He replied that he would go before Belisarius.



They pulled them down and tore them limb from limb.

CHAPTER II.

Rome Roman Once More.

The great soldier sat under an awning on the deck of his flagship and received Rhesus with an ironical smile on his leonine face.

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"You know, Sir Pirate, how we deal with those—without exception—who prey upon the commerce of the empire?"

"Yes," answered Rhesus. "You deal with them as they merit, as I should deal with them were I in your place. But you will not so deal with me when you know how I come to be in this plight."

He watched the rear-guard of the little army trailing round the bend of the hills.

"I can but judge a man by his friends," said the soldier; yet there was an awakening interest in his eyes and a perplexing air of half-recognition in his face, so Rhesus took fresh heart and told somewhat of his story.

"If a man should fall among thieves, and be forced to act as a thief to keep a whole skin; and should be so in love that he prefer life with dishonour—and hope—to death, what then?" he asked.

"What then?" repeated the general. "Why, I should say it was a hard case, but not sufficient excuse for one with so smooth a tongue, even as yours! But don't give way yet, man; Belisarius loves justice above all things, and there is something familiar in your face. Here, Procopius; perchance you have a better memory than I. Where have we seen this fine fellow before?"

The learned secretary and companion of the general eyed the prisoner a moment, nonplussed by his dress and altered appearance, then the light of recognition broke through the clouds of his perplexity.

"You see so many faces, general, or you would remember him well. Mind you not young Rhesus—Rhesus the Roman—who was the best charioteer in the capital, albeit he wore the green badge; whom they sentenced to the galleys?"

"That I do now," cried Belisarius, who came himself of a family of charioteers, "I recollect him well, and have wished he had worn the blue." Then he turned to Rhesus again, smiling. "I can believe your tale now, though it seemed but a coward's plea at first. I cannot help but spare your life now, Rhesus, come what may of it at Court, where I have many enemies. Will you wear the blue and enter into my service in this coming campaign in Italy before you venture back to the capital? I have need of resolute men such as you, to lead these ill-paid mercenaries."

He looked at the prisoner keenly as he spoke, and the latter felt that fascination for him that made him so liked by his soldiers, seize him all on the sudden. He had admired his loyalty and martial skill before; he was now enamoured of the man.

"I will put on the azure band to-day," he cried, grateful and enthusiastic, "and you can make me what you will, so long as I get to Rome and see the banners of Byzantium flying from her walls!"

"This is a man's talk!" answered Belisarius, with kindling eyes. "I never heard sound sweeter to my ears than that, even when I paced the Vandal, Gelimer, in his purple robe, through the crowded streets of Constantinople! Had I a dozen such men to help me I should feel more secure in my successes. Consider yourself officer of a thousand, Rhesus, from to-day. Procopius will attend to your wants to-night, and show you the men."

So from a pirate Rhesus was transformed suddenly to an officer of the expedition to Rome, sworn to loyalty and allegiance to the Emperor who had sentenced him to the galleys. He took care, however, that the tale of his life, and his identity was not bruited about among the sailors, and so felt easy as to the ultimate outcome of his good fortune. The better food and easier mind he gained soon told upon him, giving him back, in some part, the healthy spirit that the years of toil and vice had stolen.

The future once more began to have a brighter tinge, and the image of Eutasia, floating through his dreams and daylight visions, held out to him a beckoning hand. He remembered now her intercession more than her girlish caprice, and though he feared Marcen's cunning, there ever came, as the end of his confusing thought, a strange, dim sense of ultimate success—a foreknowing, as it might be, that she would be true to him through all; that to keep her first vow she would break a thousand others. Whence came this feeling he knew not—who should tell him? The world of life is surely greater than we see with these wondrous orbs of ours, and who shall say what messages, what influences, are passed from one to another of us through that larger part of existence that is to us unseen?

Surely Lucretius was in error—surely there are other things in nature than the ever-falling atoms? But such

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matters as these, Rhesus, are best left to the scattered students of your old academies!

The soldiers told him much of recent history, as the keels of the light ships cut the sparkling waters of the pleasant sea, and he made himself a favourite with all in those hours of ease snatched from the constant care of governing; those hours spent in the cool, fresh mornings, and the langourous, darkening eves, when the vessel slipped sibilant through the slight curl-spray, and the sun in his rising or setting was attended by sundry stars.

He heard of the ambitions of King Amalasontha, whose dream of a United Gothic Italy was so roughly nipped in its budding by the hired assassins of Theodatus; how the latter, too, was deposed and slain at Capua, after enduring a twenty days' seige that was terminated by General Vitiges entering the town through the aqueduct; how Vitiges was made king in his place.

It were needless to weary the reader here with the campaign that now followed—how Belisarius enticed Vitiges away from the capital, and sailing up the Tiber in his absence, laid siege to the ancient City of Seven Hills; how aged Lenderis and the garrison gave in and were allowed to go free. That is all in the history books. But long after, Rhesus remembered seeing the old man and his scanty troop marching out along the broad Flaminian Way; and he thought that after all, those Goths were not so barbarous as their eastern compeers, that the Holy City might have been in worse hands than theirs.

The Roman triumph was not long unchallenged. Vitiges gathered his force together, profiting much by the ill support Belisarius received from the east, and the brave general found himself at last with 5,000 men only, besides the inhabitants of the city—whose old traditions yet lingered, called upon to defend Rome for more than a year against an overwhelming army of revengeful Goths.

For a year and nine days Rhesus marked by day their steely ring drawn close, and saw by night the twinkling curve of their bivouac fires. Often, in that long siege, his heart sank and his hope dulled, but as often the depression passed, charmed away by the romance of the place. The very streets he trod, the houses he lived in, the walls he defended were holy ground to him, the fallen shrine of the old beliefs he cherished so fervently; and who fights so well in the darkest hour as one who fights to guard the relics of his faith from infidel hands?

Along the wall that stretched from the Pincian to the Flaminian gate, the fiercest fights befel, and there Rhesus was apportioned; and though he strove his hardest, giving his soldiers scant time for rest or sleep, himself less, the fierce Goths wrecked much of the old glory he sought to save.

The old Mole of Hadrian, covered with the white marble of Paros, was partially destroyed, and though those huge bows, the balistæ, and those huge slings, the onagri, were worked almost continually, the foe often gained footing within the lines long enough to do irremediable mischief. Some of the matchless statues chiselled by Praxiteles and Lysippus were thrown down and broken in their charges—work that would have been immortal destroyed in the frenzy of an hour.

But the garrison never lost faith in Belisarius, and darind them to a pitched attack on the tenth day of the secong year, repulsed the Goths and drove them out over the Milvian Bridge, slaying some 30,000 in the rout, besides the many who fell into the Tiber and the Father River swept away in his vengeance.

And then, had the promised reinforcements been sent to Belisarius from Constantinople, Rome would have been made Roman for certainty, would never have had other than a Roman master again. But the jealousy of Justinian lost the golden opportunity, allowing the enemy time to regather their forces. It is true that the troops followed Vitiges and defeated him in Ravenna, his last stronghold, and made themselves popular with the peaceful, law-abiding people—for Belisarius allowed neither rapine nor plunder on his marches;—it is true that winter and disease wasted away the army that Theodebert the Frank was hastening southward with, and delayed the preparations of Totila, the clever young leader of the Goths; but in the midst of it all the enemies of the General at Constantinople prevailed, and he was recalled to once more prove his loyalty to an unworthy ruler.

He left as many men as he dare to guard Rome until his return, and set out with unmoved fortitude to meet his traducers. There is surely no more pathetic spectacle in history than that of this brave and skilful soldier, true beyond corruption and loyal passing belief, accepting so calmly the suspicion cast upon him; never swerving from the course of unquestioning duty, though his steadfastness was ever to his own loss.

He left Rhesus, with a picked band of men, at a lonely village just within sight of the Great Aqueduct that in old time carried the water of the hills into Rome, and bidding him guard his line of retreat, struck out across the country to the east coast, where the fleet lay.

"If I cannot come back within the year all will indeed be lost," he said at parting, "and then, Rhesus—or before, if all be lost sooner—you will best serve your country by saving your skin and making for home. I will bear you a message to this love of yours, as you have asked, and if her answer be as you think, will dispatch you word by a trusty slave. And so, Rhesus, farewell."

Thus mindful of an underling's welfare in the midst of his own misfortune and anxiety, he bade Rhesus good-speed, and the latter saw him not again. He watched the rear guard of the little army trailing round the bend of the hills until the last man vanished behind the dim edge of the fertile slope, and as the white mists of evening began to rise from the sun-baked valley, turned his horse's nose back to his temporary home. A soldier's lot is hard at times, when the glamour of victory is taken away and the heat of battle is gone!

But Rhesus had soon other things to occupy his mind than solitude and sadness. The dark past, with its culminating night of horror, thrust itself before his memory again, compelling him to begin the struggle anew, reminding him that he was still in the toils of treachery, and must in some way cut himself loose from the meshes of the clinging net. It happened thuswise.

(To be continued.)

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THE MIRACLE THAT WAS NOT PERFORMED.

THERE was once a learned doctor who had studied long and hard, but in Cucuguano, where he had settled, no one had faith in him. Meeting him always with a book in his hand, the Cucuguanese said:

"That doctor knows nothing—he is always studying. If he studies so much, it means he needs to learn; if he needs to learn, it means he does not know; if he does not know, he is an ignoramus."

A doctor without patients is like a lamp without oil. Without other resources, forced therefore to earn a living by hook or by crook, up to this time the poor man had not been able to pay even for the water he drank.

He decided that there must be a change. So one day he managed to spread abroad through all Cucuguano the report that his science was so sublime and all-powerful that not only could he heal the sick—mere child's play—but raise the dead as well. This miracle he promised to perform openly in broad daylight in the multitude.

Few gave credance to the report. Yet even the incredulous said:

"We will let him attempt it, anyhow. Let's see him at work—the proof of the pudding is the eating. He may succeed—he reads so much, and nowadays such wonderful discoveries are being made."

Finally it was settled that on the following Saturday, at the stroke of noon in the cemetery of Cucuguano the doctor would raise a man from the dead—nine or ten, some old women went so far as to say.

There was a crowd of people in the cemetery that morning, and, true to his word, on the second stroke of the bell the doctor appeared. He bowed to the crowd and began:

"My dear friends, I have promised to bring one of your dead back to life. I intend to keep my word. Be silent and hearken to me.

"It will cost me absolutely no effort to raise from the tomb Giacomo or Giovanni, Nannina or Betta, Amadeo or Simone. Shall I raise Simone? Simone—what was his last name? Simone Capannaro, who died of pleurisy a year ago."

"Excuse me, signor dottore," said Caterina, poor Simone's widow. "Certainly he was a fine fellow: he made me very happy, and I shall mourn him as long as I have eyes for tears. But, pray, do not bring him back; for, you see, towards the end of the month I'm to put off mourning, and, to please my family, I'm to marry Pasqualone."

"You did well to tell me, Caterina. Then I will raise Nina Carota, who died on Candlemas Day."

"For heaven's sake, signor dottore!" cried Giacomo Carota, "Nina was my wife; we lived together ten years—ten years of misery, as all Cucuguano knows. Let her rest where she is, for her sake and mine. Such a temper, doctor! Obstinate as a mule, lazy, and quarrelsome. And that is not all. But that's better left unsaid."

"Yet, my dear fellow——"

"Excuse me for interrupting, signor dottore. Nina left me three children, and, as I could not manage them alone, I have married again—so you see, it is useless."

"Well and good. I can conceive it would be martyrdom to have two wives in the house. Then whom shall I restore to you, my dear people? I must find some one. How about Master Pietro?"

"Ah, my poor father!" cried a voice. "May he rest in peace! A good man was he! But don't bring him back, pray, doctor! He who wished so much to see us a united family would be heartbroken to find our affairs in such a muddle. After a dozen law suits, the six of us—four sons and two daughters—have finally divided the property into six little strips. Each of us has a swarm of children; each of us has to shift for himself. There is not one of us who has anything to spare."

"So it cannot be?"

"No; if you should bring him back we would have to make up a little income for him among us all. But the times are so hard, doctor, you know. And the taxes are heavy——"

"Enough, we will let Master Pietro sleep on. But I have not come here for nothing. Tell me whom to raise."

"Ghita—bring back Ghita, my Ghita!" cried a poor old woman, weeping.

"No, no, doctor; do not wake her," interrupted a girl. "Oh, no, pretty creature; it's all well she died. We dressed her in white and put a wreath on her hair till she looked like a bride. Leave her in holy ground; the man she loved was killed."

"Poor Ghita! But you must admit you are making it hard for me. To put an end to it all, I will bring back Gringaletto, who was choked to death while eating dinner not a month ago."

"You must not—you must not," cried Lina Paparero, wringing her hands. "He sold me that vineyard of his on the instalment plan. For ten long years I've been paying in hard coin far more than its value, and now would you have me go on? He charged exorbitant interest. It's not fair, signor dottore."

"What's to be done? I'll try someone else. I see over there a little white wooden cross; the harebells seem trying to hide it; the tall grass is almost on a level with it. You can read that that narrow grave holds a ten-months-old baby. True, it seems half a pity to bring the tender soul back to this world to bear—what you have all been bearing. Still, if you wish him raised, say but the word, and I will display my power."

"Signor dottore," whispered a wrinkled crone, "that little one is ours, alas! I am the grandmother. My daughter had not yet weaned him; he was just cutting his teeth when suddenly he died. But God took him from us. God's will be done! Now there is another babe. God knows what He is doing. What he takes with one hand He gives back with the other. We are poor."

At this the doctor burst out:

"Enough for to-day, if not too much, indeed! Since you won't have the miracle now, I will perform it on another occasion. Only I beg of you to agree beforehand on the person to be brought to life."

And he strode away.

From that memorable day our cunning doctor has done wonders in Cucuguano. It is true he does not raise the dead, but he saves the lives of those who are ill. The Cucuguanese, now fully trusting him, say:

"If he did not fulfill his promise, to tell the truth, it was not his fault—it was ours."

D. CIAMPALI.

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The Lustre Lasts!

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DESTROYS BUGS FLEAS MOTHS BEETLES

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NOSE MACHINE.

This is a contrivance by which the short cartilage of the nose is pressed into shape by wearing the instrument an hour daily for a short time. Price 10/6, sent free for stamps.

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Opposite Bedford Row. (Est. 1850.)

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in the World for Lashes, Eyebrows, and Hair on the Head, with Moustache and Beard. For Ladies' Hair and for all Colours. Had at 3s. 6d., post 3s. 9d., of ALEX. ROSS, 62 Theobald's Road, High Holborn, London, W.C. Spanish Cantharides for fallen hair, 3s. 6d., 5s. 6d., and 10s. 6d.

A SPLENDID OFFER TO "SHORT STORIES" READERS.

25,000 HAND CAMERAS

at 4s. 6d. each.

£150 in Prizes

Given for Photos taken with "Short Stories" Hand Cameras.

NOTICE.—THE "SHORT STORIES" HAND CAMERA.

This Camera is being specially made for *Short Stories* by one of the largest camera manufacturers in Great Britain. This camera is listed by the makers at 10s. 6d. each, and our readers, by special arrangements, are going to be supplied with it at 4/6, together with a supply of Dry Plates, Chemicals, and a Book of Instructions enabling anyone without previous knowledge to take a photo with the greatest of ease. A Competition List will be sent with each camera. 6d. extra will be charged for parcel post, 5s. in all. This camera has a powerful lens, double dark slide, focussing screen, shutter for time and snap-shot photos. A well-made and neat camera.

"SHORT STORIES" TOURISTS' CAMERA.

—This camera carries 6 quarter-plates, and is fitted with a view-finder and shutter for time and snap-shot exposures. This is a splendid camera to take on your holidays. Only 2,000 of these will be sent out. These are offered to our readers by the makers for the moderate sum of 7/6, and 6d. parcel postage; 8/- in all. This is a splendid opportunity for securing a splendid camera for a very moderate sum. With each will be given Dry Plates, Chemicals, and Book of Instructions, Lists of Prizes, and Particulars of Competitions.

RULES.—All persons sending must mark on the left-hand top-corner of the envelope the words "*Short Stories* Camera," and send it along with postal order for amount to the manufacturers,

THE SILVERITE CO., LONDON ROAD, LIVERPOOL.

NOTICE.—No person will be supplied with more than one Camera.

SPECIAL NOTICE.—THE GRAPHIC STEREOSCOPE

A SPLENDID INSTRUMENT.

By means of this beautiful instrument the photographs are rendered so vivid, the objects stand out with such distinctness, that the observers would almost think they were looking at nature. With it we shall send twenty-four Stereoscope Slide Views, including Landscape Scenery, Statuary, Comic Views, and a variety of subjects. This will be sent to the readers of this paper, all complete, for 2s. 9d., parcel post paid. This is honest value at 10/6, and we offer it for 2/9, parcel post paid.

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WHY INDUCE HEART DISEASE TO CURE YOUR HEAD

When you can get a real safe remedy like KAPUTINE?

Dr. Thurston, Licentiate, of the Royal College of Physicians, writes November 16th: "Knowing the formulæ from which KAPUTINE is compounded, I unhesitatingly recommend its use in preference to crude Antifibrin and other synthetic drugs which, unfortunately for sufferers, are so commonly used for Headache, and which have undoubtedly injurious effects on the Heart, Brain, and Vesicle tissues generally."

NOTHING LIKE KAPUTINE. NOTHING SIMILAR. NOTHING AS GOOD.

All leading Chemists sell it. Packets of 18 doses 1s. Sample 1d.

After 13 Years' Suffering, Cured for 1s.

The Rev. T. TAYLOR, Vicar of St. Bredward, Cornwall, writes: "Owing to a severe accident while riding, my wife has for the past thirteen years been subject to violent attacks of neuralgia. The relief she has experienced from KAPUTINE has been speedy and effectual. KAPUTINE, while it is efficacious in its use, is attended with none of the disagreeable after effects which she has experienced in the case of other drugs."

After 10 Weeks' Suffering, Cured for 1d.

DEER RECTORY, MINTLAW, ABERDEEN,

From Rev. J. H. BUEN. NOVEMBER 8TH, 1897.

"My own cure with one dose of KAPUTINE was marvellous after ten weeks incessant neuralgia.

Used also by Her Grace the Countess of Cavan, Lady Dashwood, The Countess of Munster, Surgeon Lieut.-Col. Baker, etc., etc.

Nothing Similar. Nothing as Good. KAPUTINE CURES HEADACHE IN 10 MINUTES.

If you enclose stamped envelope to A. M. Kaputine Ltd., Huddersfield, you will get free samples by return.

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NOTES OF INTEREST.

SWIMMER.—Some medical authorities assert that most of the supposed cases of drowning through "cramp" are not due to that cause at all. Many swimmers, if seized with cramp, could turn over on their backs and float for a time with the chance of being rescued. These authorities say that death results from a perforation of the drum of the ear, the pressure of the water causing vertigo and unconsciousness.

U. G. D.—Admirals and generals are of equal rank, but the former take the precedence in cases where two officers belonging to each grade meet together, the Navy being considered the most distinguished service.

QUERIST writes: "Is there any place in the heart of London where a watchman calls the hours of the night, as the old 'Charley' used to do? I have heard so."———Yes; in Ely Place, Holborn Circus. When the gates of this little street are closed, the watchman reigns supreme; the police have no legal right to enter; and the watchman must call the hours from eleven at night till five in the morning. An old charter gives the watchman the right to act in all respects as a policeman. Ely Place is governed by commissioners, the present Chief Commissioner being the well-known solicitor, Sir George Lewis.

R. B.—The Boers are descended from the Huguenots who left France under the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and from the Hollanders who emigrated at various times in search of civil and religious liberty.

G. W.—Wolves' skins make the best banjo drums.

T. S. would like to know why Santiago is sometimes called "Santiago de Cuba."———Because there are other places of that name, the Spaniards almost always (in ordinary circumstances) add the words "de Cuba." The three places best known by that name are, Santiago de Compostella, in Spain, which city claims to have relics of the Apostle St. James—Sant Iago, as the Spaniards call him. The Apostle is said to have founded the city. The other two are the Cuban stronghold and the capital of Chili.

L. E. N.—Yes, corsets have been found on the waists of Egyptian mummies.

W. R. G.—Practically, a judge cannot be removed from his office, as to do this it is necessary to obtain the intervention of the Sovereign on an address presented by both Houses of Parliament. Such a proceeding is very rarely necessary, as judges are generally more willing to resign than to be deprived from any cause of their official robes.

My readers will observe this week that we have begun "The Final War" in *Short Stories*, and I most strongly recommend everyone to read the opening chapters. It is without doubt one of the finest war stories ever written, and dealing, as it does, with places and persons the names of whom you are well acquainted it is of special interest. Another series of stories under the heading "Untold Stories of the Indian Mutiny" starts in this number, and I may say in connection with this series that all the facts are absolutely correct. The author is thoroughly acquainted with every phase of Hindoo life, and has heard the stories mostly from the lips of those who were actually through the Mutiny.

T. B. T. writes to ask what quadruped is the most numerous all the world over.———Without a doubt, the rat. Every continent of the world has its variety of rat. It has been found in most of the South Sea and Indian Ocean islands, and the remote rocks of Ascension and St. Helena have long been its home.

W. H. wants to know if the artificial incubation of eggs is a modern invention.———Far from it. It was practised by the Chinese and the ancient Egyptians. Diodorus, who wrote forty years B.C., tells us "that the Egyptians, with their own hands, bring eggs to maturity, and the chickens thus produced are not inferior to those hatched in the ordinary manner."

H. G.—Counterfeit sovereigns and shillings are usually made of electro-plated iron. The false coins will not bend, and, standing any of the ordinary tests, are successfully passed in considerable numbers.

GREETING.—No, the shake of the hands has not always been the common form of greeting in England. Down to the reign of Charles II. the kiss was the common form of greeting for friends and strangers alike, and shaking hands was a mark of close intimacy or high favour. Anne, Countess of Pembroke, one of those ladies whose diaries have been made public property, used to note in her diary the persons with whom she had shaken hands, as though it were something out of the ordinary to greet anyone in that fashion.

W. T.—Russia has 650,000 hereditary nobles, and 380,000 whose nobility expires with them. A nobleman has few, if any, privileges as such. He must enter the army or civil service to obtain precedence in Society.

A. P. L.—The Chinese prefix "Ah" to a person's name is an endearing diminutive, equivalent to Tom-my, Sam-my, John-ny in the English language.

H. R.—No, clergymen are not allowed to enter trade of any description. This was not always so. In olden times it was not at all an uncommon thing for clergy, who were very badly paid, to eke out a living by trade dealings. The Abbot of St. Albans, in the time of Henry III., might be seen behind his stall selling Yarmouth bloaters, and those who wished to obtain foreign goods cheaply in the time of Henry VI. had but to apply to a couple of Iceland bishops, who had received a license from the King for smuggling.

L. H. G.—Napoleon Bonaparte was never wounded. Wellington was once, but only very slightly.

HUSSAR.—There are several explanations of the origin of this name, but the most probable is that it is derived from the Magyar word, *houtsar*—"twentieth." In 1445 it was found necessary to take important steps for the preservation of Hungarian territory, and a law was passed compelling the peasants to supply one man out of every twenty to serve as a soldier—and that man must be a horseman. The first hussars were from the plains, and at the present time the Hungarian hussars are the best light cavalry in the world.

T. R. H.—The entire service of trains is re-organised twice a year—in the spring to provide for the summer months, when the passenger traffic is heavy and the goods and coal traffic light; and again in the autumn, with a view to the winter months, when the passenger traffic is light and the goods and coal traffic heavy.

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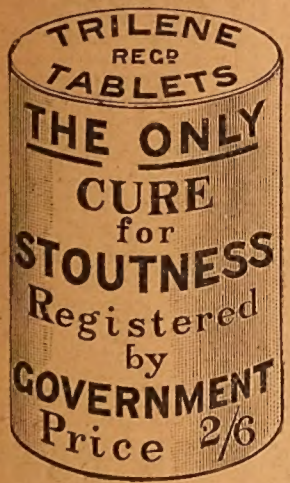

For a few weeks. They will safely REDUCE WEIGHT and CURE CORPULENCY PERMANENTLY, whether Abdominal or General. They are small, agreeable, harmless, sent privately, and never fail to Improve both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of Diet.

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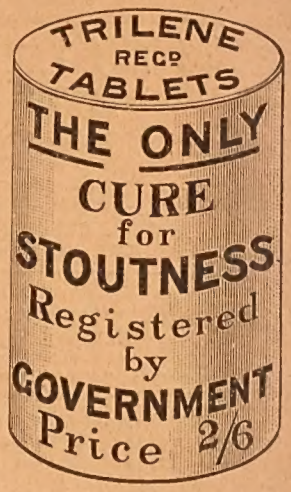
Send **2s. 6d.** to THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66, Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.



SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87 Alexandra Road, Norwich, October 19th, 1896.

"Gentlemen,—In reference to Trilene Tablets, I may say that my wife found the greatest possible benefit from the use of them; their action was rapid, and exceeded our utmost expectations, as they were also most beneficial to the respiratory organs. My wife was many years growing so stout, but although the disease was, I consider chronic, the Tablets soon reduced the same completely. You have our united thanks, and if I can do anything to promote your interests I will freely use my utmost endeavours to do so.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Convalescent Home, New Brighton, Cheshire.

Miss S. J. PRITCHARD says: "They have done me good. I am 21lb. lighter already."

25 Windsor Terrace, Penarth, Cardiff.

Miss M. FLAVELL says: "I have lost 2st., and am much better in health."

Mrs. F. HARPER, 61 Portland Crescent, Leeds, writes: "My doctor persuaded me to try a box, and I find they have done my breathing a lot of good and I can get about much better. My doctor did not wish his name mentioned, but they have done him good personally."

A. BROWN, of 25 Edwin Street, High Pallion, Sunderland, says: "You have no idea what a most wonderful effect the Tablets had. I am a great deal thinner, and better in health."

Nurse CROUCHER, at Mrs. Bennett's, 14 Buckleigh Road, Streatham, says: "I lost 9lb. from the box I took."

"77 Hindhill Street, Heywood, February 5th, 1898.

"Gentlemen,—I have not quite finished the box of Tablets and am 21lb. lighter. The change is great, and several friends are beginning the treatment, which not only reduces fat but strengthens rheumatic joints—such has been the case with me.

"Yours sincerely, M. A. HEYWOOD."

Mrs. D. BURTON, of Silverleigh, Tunbridge, writes: "I am very pleased with difference in size, my friends all telling me how much thinner I am getting."

Windsor Hotel, Merthyr Vale, South Wales.

Mr. J. THOMAS writes: "When I started the Tablets I weighed 17st., and have got down to 14st. 9lb."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

Mr. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15st."

Extract from *The Lady*, September 3rd, 1896: "Many stout persons have suffered untold agonies in unavailing efforts to reduce their bulk, either by means of severe dieting, or by taking more or less deleterious drugs; but all these pains would have been saved if they had only invested in a box of the wonderful Trilene Tablets which are quite harmless, containing neither mercury, arsenic, nor any other mineral poison, and which are an unfailing cure for obesity.

FATHER T. M. BYRNE, of Holy Cross Abbey, Sligo, writes: "When I began your Tablets I was 12st. 5lb.; I now scale at 10st. 11lb.—my case, too, is hereditary."

L. LUDDRINGTON, "Sunnyside," Station Road, Sidcup, says: "I have benefited greatly, and have lost a stone."

Mr. MCLEOD, 44, Calside, Paisley, writes: "I have been cured. If you want to know my weight now, it is 10st.; reduced 1st. 8lb., and I am quite content."

A. M. PRATT, of Ongar House, Ongar, says: "My weight is so much reduced it is unnecessary to take more. The reduction of weight was from 12st. 6lb. to 10st. 4lb."

Miss A. ATKINS, 329 Southdown Road, Liverpool, writes: "I lost nearly a stone from taking one box."

Mrs. WHITEHOUSE, of Poplar Avenue, Edgbaston, writes: "My husband is in splendid health, and has lost 15lb. in weight since taking the Tablets; I am sure I thank you on his account."

Mrs. JAMES SMITH, of Cowell Terrace, Soham, says: "Your 2s. 6d. box of Tablets reduced my weight 12lb."

Mrs. WOODS, 447 Cowbridge Road, Canton, Cardiff, says: "Tablets have a most marked effect, and I shall take every opportunity to make known the wonders of your remedy."

Col.-Sergt. WHITTLE, of East Lancashire Regt., Burnley, Lancs, says: "A man in our regiment in 1891 lost several stone from taking your Tablets."

Mr. BUTLER, Surgeon, of Hampton Manor, Evesham, says: "My patient has lost 1st. in weight whilst taking your Tablets."

"Miss HUMPHREYS, of Claremont Buildings, Shrewsbury, has lost 1st. in weight already, and thinks the Tablets deserve every success."

Mrs. O'CONNOR, 2 Kensington Square Mansions, London, writes: "I am much less stout for taking them."

Surgeon Colonel E. S. BRANDER writes from Ihansi, India, in September, 1897: "Your Tablets in my own experience form an excellent remedy for reducing weight."

The Princess LIECHTENSTEIN writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send me your excellent Tablets."

Mrs. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Ross, Hereford, writes: "I am reduced from 13st. 8lb. to 11st. You may use this if you like."

Miss J. GUISE, 3 North End, Croydon, says: "I cannot speak too highly of the Tablets; I was stout all my life until a few weeks ago, when I first began your treatment. I was surprised to find they acted so admirably. I am now getting quite a slender figure, besides being better in health."

Balgowan Lodge, Methven, N.B.

Miss MCPHERSON writes: "I have taken a box, and am reduced 1st. in weight."

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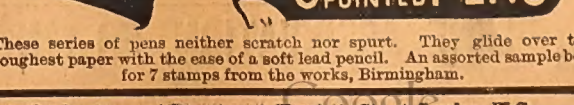

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